



1933

## A history of education in Mexico since 1857

Alma S. Andrews  
*University of the Pacific*

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A  
HISTORY OF EDUCATION  
IN  
MEXICO  
SINCE 1857

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By  
Alma S. Andrews  
June 12, 1933

A Thesis  
Presented to the Department of Education  
College of the Pacific

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In partial fulfillment  
Of the  
Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts

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Approved:

*J. William Harris*

Head of the Department

Deposited in the College Library:

*Harriet E. Boaz*

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Dated:

*June, 1938.*

LOVINGLY INSCRIBED AND DEDICATED

TO

MY MOTHER

JANE PAGE SANDERS

WHOSE FAITH AND LOVE HAVE BEEN AN INSPIRATION

THROUGHOUT MY LIFE



## PREFACE

The purpose of this thesis is to give an outline of the marked progress of education in Mexico since 1857, the date of the final separation of church and state.

Having taught for several years in Americanization schools, the writer has experienced close contact with all classes of Mexicans. Consequently, this study has been entered into for the purpose of bringing about a better understanding of the peculiar needs of the people, and of the problems confronting the Mexican nation as a whole.

It is the sincere hope of the writer that this work will absorb the interest of those people who are not familiar with the educational problems of Mexico, and that it will shed a faint beam of light upon the evolutionary efforts of a not backward, but a heavily oppressed nation striving laboriously to emerge from the insidious coils of religion and politics which have attempted to strangle all material progress in education during the past centuries.

Throughout the scores of volumes of reading material written in both Spanish and English upon the subject of Mexican educational development, three dominant themes have been observed, namely: (1) the many years of terrible oppression by the Spanish conquerors, the church, and upper

classes, (2) the exploitation of the people by the foreign empire builders, (3) and the lack of national consciousness, and the great task of educating the people into a national consciousness after centuries of oppression.

The history of education in Mexico is a subject so broad, and the years covered so extensive and critical that only a few definite comments can be made on the different aspects of educational progress and retardation since 1857; but nevertheless in spite of the struggle for enlightenment, there has been a successful achievement in education.

## FOREWORD

My obligations in writing this thesis are many. I wish particularly to thank Dr. J. William Harris, my helpful adviser, Dr. G. A. Werner, and Dr. Wilson Wilmarth who read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

I am indebted to the following people for their kind assistance in the completion of this work: Harriet Boss, Librarian, College of the Pacific, for extra hours of personal assistance; Dr. Herbert I. Priestley, Director of Bancroft Library, for access to many valuable books; Alberto G. Moreno, Chief Clerk in Office of Secretary of Education, Mexico City, Mexico, D.F., for loan of statistical Notices on Public Education in Mexico; Dr. Emory S. Bogardus, Professor of Sociology, University of Southern California, for assistance in Bibliography.

I am also greatly indebted to my most beloved friends, Dr. Eva Gill Clark, Berkeley, for Spanish translations, and Mary Clark Hansen, Commercial Artist, San Francisco, California, for the illustrations.

Alma S. Andrews

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## INTRODUCTION

"Friends let us follow the cross; and if we have faith we shall conquer."

Such was the motto of the black and crimson banner, emblazoned with the cross and coat of arms of the King of Spain, which Cortez and his little band of soldiers planted upon the ramparts of Chapultepec Palace in the capital of the mighty Aztec Empire.

That hour began the domination of the Roman-Spanish church and state, and the decadence of all that was good and great in the native Indian civilization.<sup>1</sup>

The so-called confederacy of the Aztecs speedily fell before the on-slaughts of Cortez, because they had a weakness for submission bred deep in their natures. They did not seem to have any desire to run away from their Spanish exploiter who did not want to work. The members of the conquered race were allotted among conquerors and made to work for their new masters in difficult places in exchange for scant food and clothing.<sup>2</sup>

From that time on down through the years there has been a great struggle of the Mexican people against the dead weight of their own ignorance and despair, and also

<sup>1</sup>Carleton Beals, "The Mexican as He Is", North American Review, 214; 538-46.

<sup>2</sup>H.I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, 115-30.

against hunger, privation, and pestilence.

There is not only a note of tragedy in the lives of the people of Mexico, but there is also tragedy in the Mexican landscape. The flat-topped pyramidal hills seem to bear the weight of the skies. The mountains are bare, and ragged, the highlands cut by deep ravines. For half a year the fields are brown, silent people walk swiftly and lightly over the dusty roads under a pitiless sun. At sundown the light turns purple, the mountains encircle the land with a horizon of luminous velvet. The night closes the little drama of the day.<sup>1</sup>

When Spain came this land was virgin, but on every side life was crushed and the spirit fled. Social life and responsibility had lost all meaning. Out of this struggle and travail the soul of Mexico was born.

Thus in the following account of the history of education there is an attempt to show the slow but rather sure progress of education since 1857 to the present time with cultural independence for the people of Mexico as its goal.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Herring, The Genius of Mexico, 13-31.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PEOPLES OF MEXICO; THEIR ORIGIN, HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Mexico is a land of tradition, and into these early origins that we must delve if we would truly comprehend the Mexican of today, in relation to his education.

Throughout Mexican history we encounter the Toltecs, Aztecs of the Chicamecs, Mayas, Otomis, Totonacs, Mexicans, Montezumas and various subdivisions of these.

The characteristics of the Toltecs' descendants is mildness, combined with docility and capability. The bad influences that Mexicans inherited from the Spanish, it is hoped, will give way before the progress of civilization and education.<sup>1</sup>

The area south of the twenty-first parallel is usually referred to as the "empire" of the Aztecs. The Maya-Quiche culture was found in the areas now known as Chiapas, Tabasco, Yucatan and Guatemala. The Otomis were in the highlands of the center. The Otomis were a primitive, warlike people, enemies of the Aztecs and earlier Nahuatlans. Their remnants existed in a very primitive state.

Other tribes were the Huichols, Coras, Tarascos, Zapotecs and Mixtecs. The culture of the two latter was highly developed. Some students think their civilization

<sup>1</sup>Susan Hale, Mexico, 11.



marked a transition between Nahuatl and Mayan. It has shown more vigor and has had greater durability than the others.<sup>1</sup>

The outstanding tribe of the Chichamecas, the Toltecs, came from the northwest. The Toltecs separated from the other Chichamecs and wandered, leaving parts of the original group at each stop.

The Toltecs were skilled workers in metals, pottery, jewelry and textiles. They were notable builders, astrologers, medicine men, musicians and priests. Their peaceful disposition finally led to their ruin.<sup>2</sup>

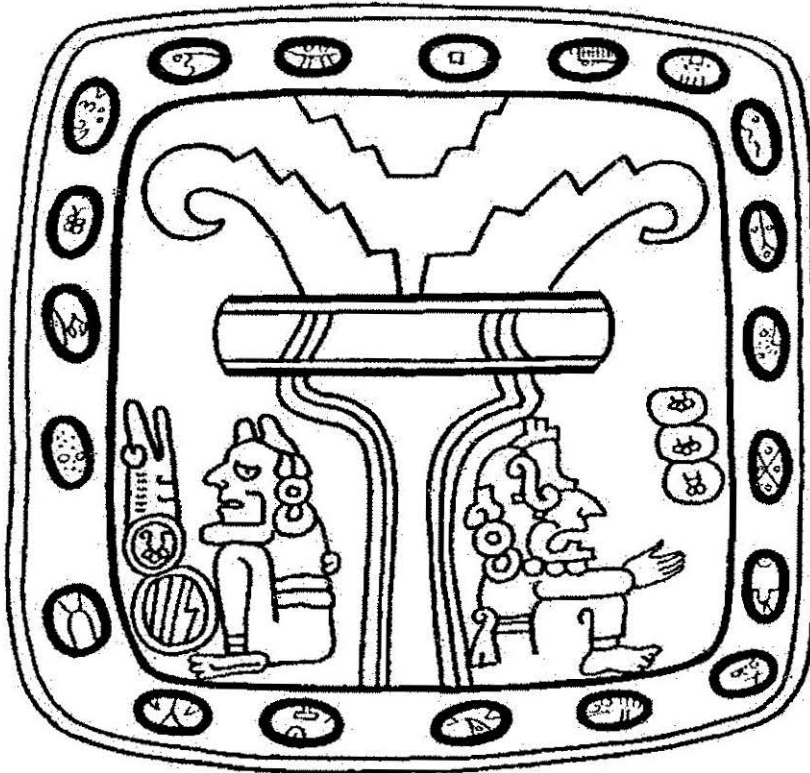
The Tezucans, descendants of the Toltecs were the first to enter Anahuac. The Aztecs or Mexicans, also Toltec descendants, began arriving there at the beginning of the thirteenth century. These tribes departed from a bountiful land to endure innumerable hardships because they interpreted the cry of a bird, "Tihui, Tihui", to mean "Let us go, let us go". Their final wanderings led them to Anahuac.

In 1470 Montezuma assumed control of the Aztecs and extended his empire from the Atlantic to the Pacific. His tributes were grinding, reducing his subjects to revolt, in retaliation for which, their lands were ravished and hundreds were carried away for slavery or sacrifice. In

<sup>1</sup>H. I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, 17-18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 19.

The Adam and Eve of the Mayas



from Brinton, Daniel G.

A Primer of Mayan Hieroglyphics

Ginn and Co.,

New York.

certain ways, however, the Aztec people were civilized and refined, in spite of their cruelty.

The conception of one supreme God, omnipotent, was a heritage from the ancient Toltecs.<sup>1</sup>

Montezuma was more of a soldier than a priest and the people gradually lost this conception. The mysteries of superstition were more popular. Little children were sacrificed to the rain-god Tlaloc. In connection with some rites, the Mexicans were even cannibalistic.<sup>2</sup>

The Mayas dwelt to the southeast of the Aztecs, and they appear on the pages of American History about the beginning of the Christian Era. Their various cultural developments indicate their wide removal from savagery. After 600 A. D. the earliest cities of Mayas were abandoned and they moved to northern Yucatan.

The Mayan monuments are still to be seen in Yucatan. Extensive ruins are probably hidden in the unexplored regions of the peninsula. Chichen-Itza is one of the few towns to preserve its ancient Mayan name.<sup>3</sup>

The Mayans used copper and gold, slings, spears and arrows. Their warriors wore armor of well-padded cotton and decorated themselves with skins and feathers. They

<sup>1</sup>Margaret Duncan Coxhead, Mexico, 74.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 79

<sup>3</sup>Susan Hale, Mexico, 70.

made boats of tree trunks and guided them most skillfully.<sup>1</sup>

Cortes, born in 1485, paid one visit to the coast of Mexico, returned in 1519 to engage the Tabascans in a terrific battle. The Mexicans imagined Cortes to be their god Quetzalcoatl and showered him with gifts and ordered his departure, most unsound psychology to use upon a greedy Spaniard. Montezuma's enemies, incurred by his habit of raiding neighboring states for sacrificial victims, joined Cortes against Montezuma.

Montezuma attacked Cortes' band by night and as a consequence became a vassal of the crown of Castile, pledging allegiance to Cortes in all his expeditions.<sup>2</sup>

Cortes next butchered 3000 Cholultecas whom he accused of perfidy. With the subdued Cholulans and Tlaxcallans, Cortes next set out for the City of Mexico. Cortes, after establishing fairly satisfactory relations with Montezuma's court, left Alvarado in charge of Montezuma, while he took a trip to Vera Cruz. Alvarado murdered some unarmed Mexicans, so when Cortes returned, he was attacked. On the night of July 1, 1520, battle occurred. The Mexicans burned bridges before the Spaniards and shot arrows at them. Cortes and his stupid Alvarado escaped. This frightful night is known as La Noche Triste.<sup>3</sup>

In this manner was a whole nation enslaved by the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 81.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 153.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 164.

ill-directed energies and perseverance of a man whose bravery might far better have been put to other uses.

A viceroy was put in control of Mexico. Mendoza, who took office in 1545, brought running water into the capital, improved Vera Cruz and began to fortify the interior of the country against Negro and Indian uprisings. He encouraged wool production, established the Grazers' Court and Guild, the Mesta at the behest of four wealthy sheepraisers of the capital. He encouraged the teaching of trades. He attempted to regulate the making of pulque, the Mexican national curse.<sup>1</sup>

Enthusiasm for education characterized the earliest establishment of the Spaniard in Mexico. Where the priests went a school was soon established for instruction of natives or education of clericals already at work, or for those intending to take holy orders.

From these schools and universities sprang the great colonial universities, of which, including that of Mexico, there were seven in Spanish America before the seventeenth century closed. Hundreds of degrees were conferred in them, upon graduates in law and theology long before the first continental English settlement was founded.<sup>2</sup>

Mexico City had its own printing press in 1535, and

<sup>1</sup>H. I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, 68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 151.

deserves credit for possession of that instrument of culture a hundred and forty years before the irascible old Governor Berkeley could ejaculate to Providence his gratitude over the illiteracy of the settlers of the Old Dominion.<sup>1</sup>

During the early 19th century, the seeds for revolution were being sown. The inhabitants of New Spain had a great deal of which to complain. They were far away from their king, whose will was interpreted by a viceroy. The Valladolid Insurrection was a direct result of his theory that the subject was born to obey and be silent.<sup>2</sup>

Iturbide, during the early part of the 19th century, induced the viceroys to return to Spain, and caused the formation of the Mexican Empire. He was shot in 1824 as a reward for his patriotism. In 1828, however, the United States recognized the independence of Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Santa Anna, or Ana, resisted the Spanish troops sent to suppress the movement for Mexican independence. Santa Anna finally gained control of Mexico, being made Minister of War and Commander-in-Chief of Guerrero whom he later murdered after the good old Mexican custom of rewarding one's fellow politicians with whom one may later disagree.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 167.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 203.

<sup>3</sup>Susan Hale, Mexico, 276.

When Santa Anna finally gained control, the Federal Constitution was done away with, state legislatures abolished, the governors becoming dependent upon central power.<sup>1</sup>

Santa Anna, by trickery, treachery and much devious plotting subverted the liberties of the people. He was a most disgusting personality and won great favor with the church by restoration of its lands which had been disbursed to the people under the Liberals.

Finally the Plan de Ayutla demanded the removal of Santa Anna and called for a constituent congress to frame a federal constitution. Benito Juarez, a Zapotec Indian, became a Minister of Justice. On November 23, 1855, he formulated the Ley Juarez which struck boldly at ecclesiastical privilege. As usual the Church came out on top through the very laws designed to curb its monopolistic greed.<sup>2</sup>

A federal constitution was finally promulgated on February 5, 1857. Titles of nobility, hereditary privileges and prerogatives were swept away. Imprisonment for debt was also abolished.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 279.

<sup>2</sup>H. I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, 321-323.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 326.



Maximilian was installed as an emperor by the French in 1864. His intentions were probably good, but he was unfamiliar with the vagaries of the Mexican mind. As a consequence of his idealism and lack of insight into real Mexican problems, he was finally shot as a traitor.

In 1877 Porfirio Diaz was declared constitutional president. Porfirio Diaz was in reality a dictator, or the Janissary of American "Big Business". From December 1, 1884 (when he was returned to power) till 1910, he was maintained in office continually, and without reflection as to the effects upon Mexico's development spiritually, intellectually, and economically, by the powers which put him there. During this period Mexico underwent a most complete change economically and politically; the agrarian democracy gave way to a feudal and capitalistic autocracy.<sup>1</sup>

The Revolution of 1910-1914 had for its avowed object the enforcement of the constitution of 1857 in general and the restoration of the agrarian democracy in particular.

Since then, there have been bad presidents and well-intentioned presidents. Their finale was usually accomplished in the same manner. Sportsmanship is most decidedly lacking in Mexican matters of a political nature, but instead there is treachery, murder, greed--the Mexican politico's trinity!

While many tremendous reforms have been attempted in

<sup>1</sup>L. Gutierrez-De Lara, The Mexican People, 311



the field of education by the various rulers of Mexico, there are still many tribes as primitive as in the days of Cortes, just as wretched and just as poverty-stricken, undernourished and miserable. On every turn is the distressing evidence of misrule.<sup>1</sup>

Where there is consideration of Mexico's tragic history, the long centuries of oppressive tyranny, betrayal and stark wretchedness, how can the outside world deny its one possible contribution,--patience and sympathy?<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the dark ages of Mexican History, education, one of the greatest forces in the life of any country, could not progress against the great opposing powers--superstition, injustice, and oppression. The idea of popular education, which is now really and irrevocably instituted in Mexico, grew out of the years of struggle for human liberty, a thing which makes the lives of any people worthwhile.

<sup>1</sup>George Creel, The People Next Door, 379.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 382.

## CHAPTER II

## FACTORS AFFECTING EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the review of Mexican history from the origin of the people down to the present, there is an awareness of several important factors affecting educational development in Mexico, namely; political, economic, domestic, social, and hygienic.

The political factors are probably first in importance in the influence of educational development in Mexico.

Democracy has never imbedded itself in Mexican life. Self-government could not exist in the colonial period. Thrust suddenly into independence the Mexicans never acquired the habit of respecting their own constitution and laws. A poor democracy would do more for progress than a good dictatorship in a country like Mexico, which owes all of its disasters to despotism.<sup>1</sup>

At present the worst enemy of education in Mexico seems to be politics.<sup>2</sup> There are no illusions about the destiny of the Mexican's education if the type of politician which he has had to endure in the past survives. It is true that education has begun, but it is yet largely dependent upon conditions which affect all Mexico, and is subject to

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Gruening, Mexico and its Heritage, 393.

<sup>2</sup>Jose Vosconcelos, "Educational Aspirations", Survey, 52: 1924, 167.

Scene showing Mexican Occupational Activities



Originally drawn by Diego Rivera  
for Mexico  
by Stuart Chase,  
The Literary Guild,  
New York,  
1931.  
p. 175

influences beyond all control of those directly in charge of education. The chronic political evils do not exempt education. This is particularly evident in the states where instruction rises and falls with the character of their governors, who cannot be depended upon for disinterested public service. Very recently some have actually closed state schools. Consequently no certain progress lies ahead. If any considerable part of the educational program is left to the states. While federal administration is not free from politics it is incomparable superior to state administration.<sup>1</sup>

One may look for improvement in education if administrative changes do not prove too upsetting and the trend is steadily toward greater stability.<sup>2</sup>

When the economic factors of Mexico are considered not even a patriotic Mexican can hide the truth. There would be no use to speak of prosperity if misery and poverty are to be found everywhere.<sup>3</sup>

With the coming of the railroads, the foreign empire builders swarmed into Mexico, consequently the Mexicans became economic dependents upon foreign investors. Some of the political leaders believed that the investors who

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Greuning, Mexico and Its Heritage, 528.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 529.

<sup>3</sup>H. C. Herring, Genius of Mexico, 154.

made his money in Mexico would become a loyal Mexican, but this was not the case. The investors built up their business, but took their money away with them, leaving a small amount to improve the Mexican nation.

Many Mexican leaders have believed in economic independence of Mexico, but any movement in their hands usually took on the character of destruction instead of construction.

The schools of Mexico as a rule are a reflection of the economic status of communities in which they are located. In many of these places the lack of money to provide the necessities of carrying on a school makes educational efforts futile. For example one small village that tops a 300 foot hill. The water supply is in a small canyon at the bottom. Every drop of water has to be carried up those 300 feet after laborious lifting from a depth of a 60 foot well by means of earthen water jars attached to ropes. The effect of this obstacle on the life of the village is difficult to imagine. No success in the education of the people can be attained in this village until the water supply alone is remedied.

In many localities the classes in the schools are so crowded, grades are so limited that the differentiation of pupils according to age and grade ability is made impossible. It is, therefore, obvious that until economic reconstruction is farther advanced, and Mexico has become

more prosperous, the majority of her children will continue without schooling.

The domestic factors have a great influence on the progress of education, especially in those countries with such economic standards existing as those in Mexico.

Under the caste system little modified in four centuries; its serfs living often literally no better than cattle, could scarcely cope with disease. Conspicuous is ignorance of ventilation. The houses of the Mexican poor on the plateau have always been built without windows and chimneys. The door alone serves as every kind of aperture, and the benefit of pure air is destroyed in an enclosed atmosphere vitiated by hours of human and animal exhalation. The houses of the well-to-do are relatively little more healthful. Fresh air is commonly held to be dangerous. There has been found an average of two families per room and one animal per person. Pigs, donkeys, and chickens make themselves at home around the family hearth. Ignorance as well as economic pressure has made for such housing.

The furniture consists of a few broken stools, a rickety table, some home woven mats for beds, stretched on an earthen floor, and the blanket used for a coat by day, and a block of wood for a pillow, serve as bedding.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Greuning, Mexico and Its Heritage, 530.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 535.

For cooking, there is a charcoal brazier, and there is a stone metate for pounding maize. The diet usually consists of flat unsalted cakes of mashed corn, Mexican beans, a diet of starvation. This is the meal year in and year out for the majority of poor families. It is no wonder that many children suffer from malnutrition, and are preyed upon by disease.<sup>1</sup> Food and bones are thrown on the floor to hungry dogs. The homes are often infested with vermin and rodents, and disease lurks everywhere.

Socially, there are in Mexico but two classes: the rich, who are few in number, comprising less than ten percent of the population; and the poor, representing more than ninety per cent. The rich are very wealthy, possessing large landed estates, while the poor are living in conditions of squalor and ignorance. Centuries of oppression have broken the spirit, and have nearly destroyed the self respect of the "peon" classes.<sup>2</sup>

Marriage was not a strong institution, even in Spain, and it will not be supposed that the Spanish soldiers acquired a more discriminating, or less immoral code of conduct while on his avowed conquests. Halfbreed foundlings were the rule rather than the exception from the earliest days of the colony, and were looked upon as markedly inferior to other groups.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Carleton Beals, "Mexican as He Is", North American Review, 214; 538.

<sup>2</sup>Emory Bogardus, Americanization, 265.

<sup>3</sup>C. D. Ebaugh, The National System of Education in Mexico, 3.



Illegitimate births still run in Spanish America from 40-60%. The mestizo group in Mexico represents these racial unfortunates, which were the products of illicit relationships between the Spanish adventurers and native Indian women. The Spanish government favored the legal union of these two races. It has been said that the half-breed group is endowed with all the vices of both progenitors and with the virtues of neither.<sup>1</sup> Such a product could not help but be inconsistent with the scheme of society, and yet it is this race that has built up the Mexican Republic.

The social situation in Mexico, naturally, retards education. Even though schools multiplied and be well endowed and teachers well paid, the wide spread social miseries would prevent regular attendance. If the social conditions are improved, education would follow. The desire to learn and to improve himself is innate in the heart of man.<sup>2</sup>

Very closely related to the social factors affecting Mexican education are hygienic factors. Mexico's social illnesses are revealed in the physical illnesses of the people. Their heritage of illness and neglect exacts a gigantic toll in bodily suffering and needless death.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>H. I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, 118.

<sup>2</sup>Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage, 516.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 533.



The common water supply of the mesa village is a stagnant pool. This polluted water causes many deaths, especially among children.<sup>1</sup>

The water shortage makes for a greater consumption of alcohol, a terrible and formidable enemy of the people. Men children are accustomed to drink from infancy, probably caused from the great lack of milk. In the most densely populated sections of Mexico, pulque, the national beverage, is drunk to excess. It is the fermented juice of the maguey plant which is cultivated extensively. Mothers, in their ignorance and in the absence of wholesome food, give their young children pulque to drink. Because of its wide consumption, pulque has become a national menace.<sup>2</sup>

Much of the ill health is due to venereal diseases, which in Mexico are considered as illnesses to which every man must sometime in his life pay tribute. With venereal diseases comes the inescapable deterioration of the physical, mental, and moral fiber of the race. Mexico is sick--gravely sick. It is evident that education cannot progress under such unhygienic conditions. The true problem of education in Mexico consists, therefore, in hygienizing the population, physically and morally.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Gruening, Mexico and Its Heritage, 536.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 539.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 544.

CHAPTER III  
RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND INFLUENCES,  
PRIMITIVE, TRIBAL, AND CHRISTIAN

An eye witness of the Cortesian conquest, one Bernal Diaz del Castillo, himself a member of the expedition, was considerate enough to leave a diary of his exploits.<sup>1</sup> This gentleman leaves a very good account of the religious rites in vogue at the court of Montezuma.

He (Montezuma), relates the explorer, ascended the steps of the temple in company with many papas (priests), and on reaching the top, began to burn incense and perform other ceremonies to Huitzilopochtli.

We, for our part, entered the temple yards and found them paved with white flagstones, and where stones were wanting, with cement, all kept so very clean one could not find the smallest particle of dust or straw anywhere, and enclosed by a double wall of stone. Before we had mounted a single one of the 114 steps of the temple, Montezuma sent down six priests and two chiefs to help our captain up....

When we reached the summit we saw a platform set about with large stones, on which they put those doomed for sacrifice, and near by was an image shaped like a dragon, and other abominable figures and a quantity of fresh blood. Montezuma himself, accompanied by two papas, came out of a chapel in which his cursed idols were standing and received us with courtesy...<sup>2</sup> Cortes then asked the favor of seeing the idols and teules.<sup>2</sup>

After Montezuma had spoken to his chief priests, we entered a small tower in which there were two altars with richly wrought carvings. On each altar stood a figure, gigantic, very flat, and that on the right represented their god of war, Huitzilopochtli. This idol had a very broad face with terrible eyes, and was covered with precious

<sup>1</sup>Kate Stephens, The Mastering of Mexico, 166.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 168.

stones, gold and pearls. Great snakes, likewise made of gold and precious stones, girdled the body of the monster, which in one hand held a bow, in the other, a bunch of arrows. A small figure standing by its side, they say was his page. At any rate, it held the idol's short lance and shield, decorated with gold and jewels.

Round the neck of Huitzilopochtli were figures of human faces made of gold, and hearts of silver set with many precious blue stones.<sup>1</sup> In front of the image stood several incense pans in which the hearts of three Indians who had that day been sacrificed, were burning with copal as a burnt offering.

The walls of the chapel the whole floor were so encrusted with human blood that they were black and the stench of the place was unendurable.

On the left hand stood another figure of the same size as Huitzilopochtli. Its face was very much like that of a bear, and its shining eyes were made of the looking glass of their country. This idol, like the other, for they say they are brothers, was plastered with precious stones. It was Tezcatlipoca, god of hell, and in charge of the souls of the Mexicans. His body was encircled by little devils with snakes' tails. The walls and floor round this idol, too, were saturated with blood so that the place smelled as vilely as a slaughter house in Spain. Five human hearts were that day's sacrifice to him.

At the top of the temple rose another chapel, the woodwork richly carved, and in it was another image, half man and half lizard, covered with precious stones, and half of the body spread with a mantle. They said the half-covered body held seeds of every plant of the earth, for this god was that of seed time and harvest. I have forgotten its name, also everything was covered with blood, and the stench was so offensive that we could hardly wait till we could get out.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapel was an enormous drum, which made a dismal noise when they beat it, like a drum of hell, so to speak, and its head of the skin of snakes, resounded so that it could be heard as many as eight miles.

In this place also, were trumpets, slaughter knives, and burnt hearts of Indians offered to the god, and everywhere clotted with blood. We hastened away from the horrors.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 169.

Then this member of a band that murdered many more than Montezuma's priests ever could, continues to relate that his master, Cortes, suggested to Montezuma that he put a cross and an image of the Virgin over the temple. Montezuma was shocked at the mention of such sacrilege to his nice gods, for atonement offering them prayers and sacrifice.

A little apart from the temple (continues Bernal del Castillo),<sup>1</sup> was another small tower, also an idol house. Rather I should term it a temple of hell, for at one of its doors was a terrible demon mouth fitted with great fangs. Near it also stood figures of devils and serpents, and an altar encrusted with blood and black with smoke. Further within were dishes and other basins in which the priests cooked the flesh of the unfortunate whom they sacrificed--the flesh, they themselves ate. Near the altar were knives and wooden blocks such as those they cut meat upon in slaughter houses, and behind that cursed house lay piles of firewood and a tank of running water. I called the place "The House of Satan".

Beyond the splendid courtyard stood another temple stained with blood and smoke, where great Mexican caciques were buried, and another holding human skulls and bones, piled in orderly fashion. Here also were other idols and other priests, clad in long black robes with hoods shaped like those of Dominican friars. The hair of these papas was long and matted with clotted blood. At no great distance from this place of skulls stood other temples to still other gods, said to be protectors of marriage. One, where abominable human sacrifices were offered, was for men, and another for women, in which women made sacrifices and held festivals in an endeavor to induce the gods to give them good husbands.

Cortes and the rest of us at last grew weary of seeing so many idols and the horrible utensils used about them and we returned to our lodgings accompanied by the many caciques Montezuma had sent as our escort.<sup>2</sup>

A word as to the functions of the gods, Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 170.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 171.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 28.

There were few departments of nature and native life with which the god Tezcatlipoca was not intimately concerned. He was present everywhere and saw all that happened, and therefore his images bore a mirror as a symbol. As the night wind he was supposed to wander through the streets after dark, in search of evil doers, and as night-god and warrior god, to appear in all sorts of grisly shapes to test the courage of those he might meet. Schools for which children prepared for military service were under his protection. Of slaves he was defender. As god of divine punishment, he was also god of confession, the penitent confessing his sins before a priest whom he regarded as a representative of god and who gave absolution. The fifth months of the year, beginning April 23, was symbolized by a figure of the god, and was the occasion of the feast at which a young man, identified with the god, was sacrificed to him, after spending a year in the enjoyment of every luxury that the Mexican civilization could afford. This ceremony is described in all of its gruesome details by Margaret Duncan Coxhead.<sup>1</sup>

Fantastic was the festival of the god Tezcat (Tezcatlipoca of other authors), the "soul of the world". Each year, a young captive, beautiful in person and noble in blood, was chosen to be the earthly image of the god.

<sup>1</sup>Margaret Duncan Coxhead, Mexico, 78, 79.



"Tezoat, who died yesterday, is come again!" said the people, prostrating themselves before him in adoration, wherever he passed attended always by reverend elders and royal pages. For a year he lived as a god in luxury and splendor, his only duty to appear often in the streets, that the people might, at the sound of his lute, rush forth to worship Tezoat the Mighty.

At the beginning of the twelfth month, the four loveliest maidens in the land, arrayed and named like the four chief goddesses, were given to him as brides. For one month he lived with his wives, feasting each day with the chief nobles of the city. But when the last day came, the mad revelry ceased and the captive was borne across the lake in a royal barge to a place called "Melting of Metals", where rose a teocalli, called the "House of Weapons".

Here in sight of worshipping crowds, he bade farewell forever to his four weeping brides. Then the priests led him up the steep track, which, winding round and round the pyramid, reached at last to the summit. At each turn he must fling to the winds his musical instruments, his garlands of flowers, or some gay emblems of his godhead.

Five priests in robes embroidered with mystic scrolls, at a sign from the high priest, who was clothed in scarlet, seized their prey and stretched him on the jasper stone of sacrifice. Two held his arms, two his legs and one his head, while the high priest, with wild incantation, raised

his curved knife of flint-like itztli, struck open at a single blow, the victim's breast, and tore from it the bleeding heart. The multitude below sank to their knees as the trophy was first held up, an offering to the sun, and then laid at the feet of Tezcat. "This", cried the priest, "is a type of human destiny, for all earthly splendor is but a shadow which flees away!"

The Aztecs worshipped the earth as Tonantzin, our beloved mother. From her womb, said they, do all that live proceed, and to her silent breast will all again return. Far below her opaque surface is the realm which the sun lights at night, the abode of the happy souls, ruled by the clement Quetzalcoatl, who there abides until the time fixed for his return to men.<sup>1</sup>

The Toltecs are believed to belong to the Maya group as Quetzalcoatl was a god both of the Toltecs and the Mayas.<sup>2</sup>

The Coming Mexico throws additional light upon the manner in which the Toltecs worshipped their god Quetzalcoatl:<sup>3</sup>

In one important respect, and it marks their superiority, the Toltecs seem to have differed widely from the Aztecs of later times. They did not offer up human beings as sacrifice upon the altars of their temples. Fruits

<sup>1</sup>Daniel G. Brinton, Religions of Primitive People, 145.

<sup>2</sup>Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol 17, 1926 edition, 323.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph King Goodrich, The Coming Mexico, 8.

and flowers were they only oblation. It is quite manifest that these Toltecs were well advanced in culture and even refinement. They were peaceful and their religion appears to have been a form of nature worship.

Daniel G. Brinton adds further that Quetzalcoatl was said to be of majestic presence, chaste in life, averse to war, wise and generous in actions and delighting in the cultivation of the arts of peace.<sup>1</sup> So closely did his precepts resemble those of Jesus, that nothing was lacking in them but His name and that of the Father.

Quetzalcoatl, when worshipped properly, without human sacrifice, seems to have been an elevating influence upon his devotees. Lewis Spence says that the priest-kings of Mayapan, who claimed descent from Quetzalcoatl, soon raised their state into a position of prominence among the surrounding cities.<sup>2</sup>

While it may be easily assumed from reading the foregoing, that the Mayas did not sacrifice to Quetzalcoatl, the usual human victims, still the Mayas did make human sacrifices to other gods, and other people made sacrifices of human beings to Quetzalcoatl, showing the inconsistencies in the Mexican primitive minds.

"Although the Mayas", states Spence, "were not nearly so prone to the practice of human sacrifice as were the

<sup>1</sup>Daniel G. Brinton, op. cit., 251.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis Spence, Myths of Mexico and Peru, 153.



Three Mayan Gods



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Nahuas, they frequently engaged in it." This statement would indicate that the Nahuas people were indeed a terrible tribe. He continues to state that the pictures of their bloodless offerings must not lead us into believing that they had never indulged in this rite. It is known, for example, that they sacrificed maidens to the water-god at the period of the spring florescence, by casting them into a deep pool where they were drowned.<sup>1</sup>

Some tribes are so bloodthirsty that it does not appear that it seemed a trifle inapropos to offer up human beings, most unwilling victims at that, to the god of love and the peaceful arts.<sup>2</sup>

The Mayan name for Quetzalcoatl was the "Man of the Sun". He was also known as the wind-god. The Kukulcan or Quetzalcoatl of the Maya has more the attributes of a primitive thunder-god.

The four Mayan gods most frequently encountered in pictures are as follows:

One Mayan god has exposed vertebrae and a skull-like countenance. His symbol is that of death. His name is unknown.

The god with a tapir-nose who walks on waters and sits on a cruciform tree, or plants maize, is undoubtedly Kukulcan or Quetzalcoatl.

<sup>1</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 167.

One god who wears a number of rays and who is surrounded by planetary signs, is god of the pole-star, name unknown.

Another god is a moon-god. He is aged, surrounded by dots to represent a starry sky, and is connected with birth. He is sometimes wearing a snail, the emblem of perturbation, on his head. He is probably Itzamma, universal life-giver.<sup>1</sup>

Another form of early institutions was that of the societies of virgins, such as that which from primitive Italic times kept alive the holy fire of Vesta, goddess of hearth and home. Exclusive associations of a similar nature were found in Mexico, Yucatan and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The Aztecs, as well as the Mayans sacrificed women victims. The Aztecs, however, did not stop at that, according to William H. Prescott, the great historian.<sup>3</sup> On some occasions, particularly in season of drought, at the festival of the insatiable Tlaloo, the god of rain, children, for the most part infants, were borne along in open littler, dressed in their festal robes and decked with the fresh blossoms of spring, they would move the hardest heart to pity, though their cries were drowned in the wierd chants of the priests who read in their tears a favorable augury for their petition. These innocent victims were generally bought by the priests of parents who were poor, but who stifled the voice of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel G. Brinton, op. cit., 125-127.

<sup>3</sup>William H. Prescott, The Conquest of Mexico, 75.

nature, probably less at the suggestions of poverty, than of a wretched superstition.<sup>1</sup>

In the foregoing account of the blood-thirsty and cruel religious institutions and ceremonies of the early tribes, one is aware of the fact that the Mexican mind was steeped in ignorance and false superstitions, a condition which could not be overcome in centuries, and which would hinder the education of any people.

While much has been said and written against the Catholic Church in Mexico, it will be necessary to admit that the most powerful moral and educational force during four centuries of Mexican life is the Church, if the pages of history are read without prejudice. The Church has exercised an influence, either directly or indirectly, in every step of the social life, which has been extremely beneficial for Mexico.<sup>2</sup>

He who bears in mind the religious conditions of Mexico before the evangelization carried on by the Catholic Church, admires, today, everywhere, the beautiful shrines and religious ceremonies common to all Mexicans over the republic, in spite of the vast extension of territory, and the meager means of communication; he who recollects the many different languages and dialects spoken by the Indians and he who observes today the predominance of Spanish language for

<sup>1</sup>C. St. John Fancourt, The History of Yucatan, 197.

<sup>2</sup>H. C. Herring, Genius of Mexico, 133.

educational purposes will have to admit the gigantic effort made by the church in favor of education.

The Church has evolved the idea of an integral education, which is at the same time religious, moral, intellectual, social, and civic. This education was perfected while the different schools were established in view of educating the mestizos, the Indians, and creoles.

The religious orders, especially the Jesuits, and Franciscans took upon themselves the education of the people by numerous and very important parochial schools.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic Church, true to its mission, has been interested in the various social problems, as well as those of education. In spite of the lack of liberty, she promotes effectively the welfare of the community.<sup>2</sup>

Protestantism in Mexico is also making efforts in favor of education. It has never fought to impose its creeds on any other branch of religion, but it has tried to enter into cooperation with all the living forces in the country, for social, cultural, religious, and moral elevation, and above all, a complete redemption of the people.<sup>3</sup>

The prime object of the Christian institutions and influences Mexico is not only to free the people from their shackles of traditional blood-thirsty religions, but also

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 136

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 139

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 146

to bring them into constant and true contact with a whole-some education that makes for complete happiness of each individual.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 153.

#### CHAPTER IV

##### PROGRESS OF EDUCATION SINCE 1857

In 1857 occurred the separation of the state and the church in Mexico, a step in her evolutionary process, lending far-reaching results to the educational movement.

With the disassociation of these two entities, the betterment intellectually, of the people in general, rather than that of the sons of the wealthy, exclusively, was looked to as the first, last, and ever the only remedy, and perhaps the only hope of the Mexican Republic.

To accelerate race transition is the avowed task of the public school with the aim of building a nation, the pupils--some millions of human beings that are longing for light, and the subject matter--anything that will assist the student to meet his daily requisites and to aid him in the formation of a new nation.

The system of school financing was adjudged to be a Federal privilege, as many of the states lacked money, the government having more ample means at its disposal.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to 1867, the private schools forwarded education, so naturally, the number of pupils was limited. After 1867 a concerted effort was made to build up a school system. A law was promulgated in Juarez's administration, defining education as compulsory, free and secular.

<sup>1</sup>Manuel Barranco, Mexico and its Educational Problems, 23.

At last the school was free from the control of the church, (theoretically, at least). The 19th Century found Mexico independent of Spain, but the clerical atrocities continued with more or less intensity up to 1917.<sup>1</sup> It was in view of these circumstances that the emphasis was laid most strongly upon the condition that the schools must remain "lay".

It must not be supposed that there were not individual priests who acted in a most Christian spirit, establishing schools, teaching without regards to social position, and interceding with the aggressors at all times, in behalf of the oppressed. It was against the church as an organization, that the dissatisfaction, resulting in a separation of church and state, was registered.

The government was sincere in its attitude towards its new responsibility, that of public education. It took charge of the educational program, appointing men of ability and wisdom to making the body of laws regulating the newly-conceived educational system. The aim of the schools had previously been to make good Catholics, now the aim was to make good Mexicans.

Although its means for promoting education were extremely limited, a certain amount was secured by appropriating what they desired. Contemplating the change that was to occur in the following year, in 1856 during the

<sup>1</sup>Manuel Gamio, "The New Conquest", The Survey, LII, 1924, 146.

<sup>2</sup>Cameron Duncan Ebaugh, The National System of Education in Mexico, 16.



presidency of Benito Juarez, the federal government took over all possessions of the church--landed property, schools, charitable institutions and endowments--and thus stripped it of its means of promoting education, which became a function of the state. In a message to the people, President Juarez proclaimed that the constitutional government during his administration would exert every effort towards increasing the number of free primary schools, providing professionally and morally equipped teachers, inciting the several states to the founding and maintenance of a greater number of schools within their respective boundaries, improving the lot of the teacher. Free and compulsory education was provided for by law in the program outlined by Juarez, but the family, the municipality, the State and the various religious organizations were permitted to administer it. For the most part the State left it to other bodies, and the church organizations once more became the leaders in educational endeavors.<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum of the Juarez regime was as ambitious as the foregoing policy, and as difficult of achievement due to lack of sufficient funds and professional educators. In addition to the "Three R's", the metric system was to be taught, as well as physics, chemistry, geometry, and geography. The teacher problem was attacked and more or

<sup>1</sup>Cameron Duncan Ebaugh, The National System of Education in Mexico, 12.

less successfully mastered by Enrique Rebsamen who founded a Teachers' Training School in Orizaba (Vera Cruz) in 1883. It was not until nine years later, however, that actually strenuous efforts were made to cope with the lack of attendance. In 1892 and again in 1896 laws were enacted which vested in the government the direct control of education in the territories and in the Federal District and established a High Board of Education to supervise primary education in the States and to provide a uniform program.<sup>1</sup>

In 1882 the school programs were similar to those of a decade later, except that no mention was made of singing, military exercises nor geometry and the drawing was much less formal, as it should be, for such young children whose imaginations outran their manual dexterity. A resume of a typical program of the next decade will shortly follow. Of the early eighties it was written that tremendous progress had been made since the final separation of church and state in 1857. Since then, both higher and lower schools have been maintained by the state, while national schools are supported by public groups in all the large towns and higher institutions in the capitals of several states. In 1883 there were nearly 5000 public schools besides establishments for the deaf and dumb, the blind and juvenile delinquents and numerous charitable foundations maintained by voluntary contributions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Mexico", Encyclopedia Britannica, 1929 ed. XV, 382.

When Porfirio Diaz was first elected president in 1876, there were only about 4000 public schools in the entire republic. From the coming of the Spaniards the chief education had been confined to the higher branches, to the establishment of seminaries, colleges and universities and the primary or fundamental branches were neglected. Under Diaz there resulted a noteworthy increase of schools and attendance. In the period between 1876 and 1891 schools of all classes had increased from 4,250 to more than 10,000 and the total attendance from 60,000 to 649,771.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now peruse the entire content of a bulletin, published by the Mexican Department of Education in 1891, in order to effect a comparison with the subjects taught in various Mexican states in a few representative years preceding and succeeding.<sup>2</sup>

A secondary school curriculum of 1890 includes moral precepts and civic instruction, national language and arithmetic, notions of geometry, geography, patriotic history, drawing, singing, gymnastics and military exercises for the boys, substituting manual labor for the latter, for the girls.

The first year pupils receive instruction in such moral precepts as obedience, abnegation and weekly exercises consisting of conversations concerning one's obligations in the schools.

<sup>1</sup>"Mexico", Encyclopedia Americana, 1932 Ed. XVIII, 761.

<sup>2</sup>Instruccion Obligatoria en Baja California y Tepic para Ninos y Ninas, 6-12, 1891, Depto. Ed., Mexico, quoted throughout.

Daily classes are conducted in the national language. Daily, there are lessons on things involving the uses of ordinary articles. Arithmetic receives daily attention, as well as drawing. Alternating classes in practical notions of geometry occur. Singing exercises are held weekly and gymnasium daily.

The second year differs slightly from the first. A discussion of moral practices or habits are taken up weekly. There are conversations upon practical questions, establishing habits upon how to conduct one's self with various members of the family and society. The national language is taught by means of descriptions and compositions concerning plants and animals, in daily classes.

The lessons on things take up the general principles of matter, divisibility, porosity, compressibility, ductability, elasticity, etc. Daily classes are conducted.

The second year arithmetic of 1890 curriculum was mental, and with numbers, and included the multiplication tables.

Practical notions of geometry were acquired through exercises concerning prisms and pyramids and triangular and quadrilateral bases, in alternating classes.

In geography the explanation of the principal terms of physical geography were taken up, such as mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, isthmuses, etc. Field excursions were also taken. The local geography of the school's environment was also studied, such as the population of

the town. Scale drawings of schoolrooms were made, classes alternating.

For a drawing lesson there were exercises in copying and originating with rectilinear figures, and the study of objects of common use. The classes were alternating.

The same singing program was used as in the preceeding year, as was the case with gymnasium, except that in connection with the latter, exercises with a stick were added.

In the third year, moral precepts were continued, with conversations contributing to uprightness and dignity, honor, truthfulness, sincerity, respect for one's self, modesty, methods of combating popular superstitions, knowledge of one's own faults, such as pride, vanity, resulting from ignorance, laziness, anger, and the inculcation of bravery, active and passive. Civic instruction includes easy ideas on the political organization of the city, canton and district, the obligations and rights of the citizens in his political relationships.

In the study of the national language, principles of composition, stories, descriptions, etc. were taken up, together with imitation and origination, orthographical and distational exercises.

The lessons on things takes up forces such as gravity, inertia, electricity, levers, effect of heat on bodies, decomposition of light by prisms, bending phenomena of reflection and refraction, electrification by friction, the winds, the dew, the rain, the ice, the lightning, easy

lessons concerning the aspect, climate, and produce of the locality, particular characters of the annelids, and insects and principal parts of the flowers, in daily classes.

The arithmetic of this year continues that of the previous and in addition, considers the problems of the home and daily life with easy lessons on money and measurements, and the Roman and the Metric systems. This, in daily classes.

The practical notions of geometry, as discussed in this bulletin, included exercises on prisms and pyramids with polygonal bases, the cylinder, cone and globe, the circle and ellipse, together with drawings of these. Alternating classes are conducted in geometry.

Geography deals, in this year, with the city, canton or district, and the federal entity. Methods of geographical drawing are taken up, such as the way in which to represent mountains, rivers, lakes, towns, cities, railways, etc.; the study of maps of district and state, the distribution of waters and continents, etc., in alternating classes.

The history includes general ideas on ancient history and the Colonial Period, explaining the principle characteristics of each of the respective towns, in alternating classes.

The drawing of this year takes up exercises in copying and originating, with curvilinear and mixtilinear figures, which represent objects and utensils pertaining

to the various arts and occupations, classes alternating.

The writing course was given over to copying of penmanship samples on paper, weekly.

Singing songs, written for one or two voices, was conducted once a week.

The gymnastic exercises are the same as for the preceding year, except that clubs are substituted for sticks. This is a daily class, while military exercises are conducted in alternating classes.

In the fourth year, the recitations on moral precepts were continued, with conversations regarding debts to humanity, justice, philanthropy, tolerance, fraternity, sacrifice of particular interests in favor of the general, (Did the Mexican politicians profit from these precepts taught them in the nineties?) recognition of the good received by the former labors of society, cultivation of tendencies toward unification of mankind and the subversion of force to reason, (How were the Revolutionists to obtain any rights by appealing to the "reason" of the ruling classes?) and practical problems of behavior of the child in school.

This program indicates very plainly that historians are quite correct when they affirm that Mexico's idealism outweighs her sense of the practical, from her educational programs to any constitution that has ever been formulated. "It, (the constitution) is too idealistic for practical



use".<sup>1</sup> One cannot escape the fact, while reading a resume of this program, that it is probably an ideal toward which to strive, rather than an actual achievement. The subjects mentioned that correspond to General Science, Plane and Solid Geometry are high school subjects in the United States, while military training is usually a college course. One may well doubt the depth to which this training of the nineties sank into the elementary pupil's consciousness.

To continue the resume of subjects studied in the fourth year, civic instruction takes up the political organization and administration of the state and the republic, the principal fundamentals of the constitution and reform laws, the obligations and rights of Mexican citizens, encouraging patriotic sentiments.

The national language study includes principles of composition, narration, descriptions, chats, orthographic exercises by dictation, exercises in language and recitations, conducted in daily classes.

Lessons on things, probably corresponding to General Science, were now concerned with simple and compound matter, the metals and metalloids, iron, copper, zinc, sulfur, phosphorus, the more important functions of life, and the rules of hygiene.

Practical notions of geometry amplified the geometrical

<sup>1</sup>H. I. Priestley, The Mexican Nation, 442.



considerations of the preceding year, as well as the construction of drawings of the development of the solids and construction of the same on pasteboard, a high school subject, incidentally, in the United States; calculation of the areas of trapezia, trapezoids, polygons and circles, the cubic measures, calculation of volume of prisms and the cylinder and the solution of various problems.

Fourth year geography deals with notions of the physical and political geography of the Republic of Mexico, the general aspects of the continents and their large political divisions, the movement of rotation of the earth and its principal effects, such as day and night, eclipses and seasons. The principal meridians of the globe; latitude and longitude are also considered.

The history treats of Hidalgo and the War of Independence, proclamation of the Republic, Santa Anna, war with the United States, the plan of Ayutla Comonfort and the Constitution of 1857, Juarez, the Reform and the French intervention, in alternating classes.

Outline drawing and drawing of objects is taken up, as well as ornaments, application of objects to the home, probably corresponding to Interior Decoration, and hasty construction of figures by scale, in alternating classes.

Writing continues with practice in the construction of upper case and lower case letters.

The same singing exercises are practiced as in the

year preceding.

The gymnastic period is given over to alternation of certain prescribed exercises with those of last year. The military exercises were the same as the year before. The girls had to do a certain amount of manual labor as well as modified gymnastics.

The reading of this bulletin gives us a fair picture of Mexican education at a time about the middle of the interval between 1857 and modern methods of education.

Passing now to a consideration of industrial development, the beginning of the Twentieth Century marked the beginning of an industrial expansion which had a profound influence upon education. In 1901 it was stated<sup>1</sup> that over half the inhabitants are found in seven states, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Puebla, Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, Michoacan, and Mexico.

"A railway which it is expected will be completed by the end of 1903, is being constructed by the government across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, from Coatzacoalcos on the Gulf of Salina Cruz on the Pacific", says the 1901 Year Book.<sup>2</sup>

Railway extension and trade extension are synonymous with educational extension.

<sup>1</sup>The International Year Book for 1901, 491.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, 492.

In 1907 democratizing influences in education were beginning to make their appearance. The modernizing tendencies were conspicuous in the educational systems of Mexico in that the inherited conservatism of a Latinized race make a concession to the democratizing influences of the times so far as to give industrial training, even for girls, a conspicuous place on the school programs.<sup>1</sup>

The extent of this democratization can best be shown in figures. In 1906 there were 557 primary schools supported by the state in the Federal District and territories with 2,371 teachers, an attendance of 59,351 pupils and an expenditure of 2,250,000 pesos or 37.93 pesos per pupil. Of these schools 377 were in the Federal District where 17 new schools were established in the early part of 1907, 3 of which were of the grade of superior primary instruction, the remaining 14 belonging to the elementary grade. There were, besides, 219 private schools in the district with 13,145 pupils, 7,000 boys and 6,144 girls with 998 teachers. A department of hygiene was created by the director-general of primary instruction in June 1906 for the purpose of providing for the proper physical development of the pupils in suitable hygienic surroundings and of preventing the spread of contagious diseases. 2,374 pupils had received

<sup>1</sup>Educational Report for 1907, Commissioner of Education, Dept. of the Interior, Washington, 241, vol. I.

a medical examination under this department. The sum of 100,000 pesos was expended for school equipment during the year.

The following table<sup>1</sup> is indicative of the number of national primary schools in the Federal District in 1906.

	<u>Number of Schools</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
Infant Schools	4	684
Elementary Primary	299	38,376
Superior Primary	30	2,206
Supplementary Night Schools for Laborers	22	3,692
Complementary Night Schools for Laborers	10	448
Commercial Schools	<u>2</u>	<u>228</u>
Total	367	45,634

Statistics regarding the teaching force of national primary schools are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

	<u>Number of Teachers</u>
Infant School	24
Elementary Primary	1,179
Superior Primary	373
Supplementary	122
Commercial	37
Complementary	<u>58</u>
Total	1,793

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 242.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. Cit.

The primary schools in the territories in 1906 are listed herewith:<sup>1</sup>

#### National Schools

Tepic	113
B. California	54
Quintana Roo	<u>13</u>
Total	180

Enrollment, 111,060; teachers 387.

Under Madero a federal system of 500 rural schools was conceived and some fifty schools were established in 1912. This number was increased to above 200, by Huerta in 1913. From this time to well after the adoption of the new constitution of 1917, during Carranza's administration, extremely unsettled conditions prevailed in the country and little was accomplished in the field of rural education. In 1921, chiefly through the efforts of José Vasconcelos, then rector of the National University, the present Federal Department of Public Education was created by constitutional amendment, and the central government was given the right to extend its educational activities to all the states of the republic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 243.

<sup>2</sup>Cameron Duncan Ebaugh, Education in Mexico, 22.

A typical school program for the year 1921, which is generally conceded to be a milestone in the annals of education, as this year is referred to as "The Reform of 1921"<sup>1</sup>, is included here as a concrete exemplification of the accomplishment up to that time.

While the "Program of 1921" shows a vast improvement in the attempt of the educators of the country to improve the conditions of the people, it was still deficient in meeting the requirements for one of national unity. For example, the Indian, as far as his needs and adaptability to this type of program were concerned, may as well have been non-existent. There are still fifty-four Indian tribes living in Mexico, each one with its own language, its own customs, and even its own prehistoric forms of religion. It is almost literally true that every other Indian does not speak or understand Spanish, which condition makes national unity much harder to achieve.<sup>2</sup>

In the following chapter, the work of some new educational forces is described, the activities of the "educational missionaries", cultural missions, and rural circuits, and which is definite toward the reclamation of the Indian tribes and other rural peoples.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>2</sup>Mary Jenness, The Wellspring, Feb. 1921, 8.

CHAPTER V  
THE WORK OF THE EDUCATIONAL MISSIONARY  
AND CULTURAL MISSIONS

In the hands of the rural communities lies the future of Mexico. Into her rugged mountain fastnesses, over her fertile plateaus, into the tropical jungles must penetrate the light of learning.

Bold spirits are needed to surmount the hardships. Enthusiasm surpassing the native indolence. fervent desire for disseminating the truth and understanding must quicken the intrepid hearts of those who would carry the torch of knowledge to the down-trodden masses.

It is to the efforts of the "educational missionaries" that the country has pinned its faith and expectations for a national consciousness, and any strivings for a unified Mexican progress, culture, and solidarity.

Under the Department of Education, there is organized a group of teachers called educational missionaries. This movement had its inception in the mind of one of the most inspired of all educational enthusiasts in Mexico, Jose Vosconcelos. As head of the educational department, he suggested that volunteer educational missionaries should undertake to teach one or more persons to read and write.

These missionaries have the task of visiting the smaller towns and Indian sections to study their educational needs,

and to organize schools in places where there have never been any. A very serious obstacle to the work of these missionaries has been found in the difficulty of finding teachers capable of developing real apostolic qualities, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

Each missionary is assigned a territory, and allotted a number of assistants who are more or less stationary; while he himself makes the rounds at frequent intervals.

The missionaries find the Maya Indians of Yucatan--perhaps the only state of Mexico that has preserved all of its local color--the most receptive and most gracious of all Mexican people. In spite of all their abuses to which they have been subjected, the Maya Indians preserved their language, their traditions, and their culture. They have done so because they have naturally a dominant and patient personality. The inhabitants of the little villages of Yucatan have always welcomed the work of the missionary, and in their own genial way have offered these teachers the best in their possessions.<sup>1</sup>

The work of the educational missionaries is a task of pioneering. Culture in Mexico has heretofore been the privilege of certain social classes, and it is only now that it has been considered worth while to develop the intelligence of the workers in the fields and factories.

<sup>1</sup>Esperanza Bringas, Survey, 52, 1924, 172.



And yet here is a people from whom we may expect an eager response, for they have never lost contact with life and are therefore prepared for the most significant truths.<sup>1</sup>

In 1924, a survey revealed the encouraging fact that a system of rural schools was definitely and well established. El Sembrado, the official organ of the Secretary of Public Education of Mexico, for 1929, has some illustrations showing the advance of the number of schools, teachers, and pupils, educated under the Revolutionary government.

<u>Schools-1924</u>	<u>Teachers-1924</u>	<u>Pupils-1924</u>
9,644	23,153	864,969
<hr/>		
<u>1927</u>	<u>1927</u>	<u>1927</u>
17,549	31,232	1,306,557

These figures include both urban and rural schools. In 1924 the number of rural schools alone was 1,089; 1,146 teachers and 65,000 pupils, to bring hope to the hearts of those educational pioneers striving to aid Mexico in emerging from her chrysalis of superstition, ignorance, and dormancy in any unified national aspirations.

The year 1925 witnessed the establishment of 48 missionaries as supervisors. The extent of their efforts is

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. 191.

no more eloquently expressed than in the statistical comment that approximately 417 schools per annum came into existence due to the endeavors of the educational missionaries and pressure upon the government to expend more money upon furthering education.<sup>1</sup>

As a rule, most of the missionaries are full of good will, but the towns and Indian tribes are too poor and too indolent to build a school, and purchase school materials; there is not enough money to satisfy the tremendous needs of the country, but the faith of the people force them to keep on.<sup>2</sup>

These young men and women who have dedicated themselves to the educational missionary movement, are not only teaching reading and writing, but they are also teaching better modes of living. They have undertaken the task of incorporating the Indians into the cultural life of Mexico without at the same time destroying their own traditions, arts, and achievements. They are prepared to teach at any and every time, and in any place they can secure auditors. They have crept into mountain passes, into deep canons, into forests, into every place, no matter how distant or how isolated from the rest of the world; they have endured or rather enjoyed the self denial, the hardships, the lack of comforts that that kind of life involves. They have slept

<sup>1</sup>El Sembrador (The Seed-sower) 1924, 12.

<sup>2</sup>Jose Vosconcelos, "Educational Aspirations", Survey LII, 1924, 168.

on floors, have eaten Indian food, and traveled through mountains on the backs of little burros for weeks and months at a time. Not only teachers, but well-known artists, musicians, poets, writers, and scholars have offered themselves for this work. Even the university intellectual forgets his cloistered habits, and betakes himself to the field and the mountain on the back of a burro.

In order to enlarge and enrich the knowledge of the educational missionaries, and to improve them vocationally, the "cultural missions" (Misiones Culturales) have been established. A cultural mission might be explained by saying that it is sort of a faculty of a normal school which travels about the country, remaining in specific districts for four weeks at a time to give intensive training to the teachers who have been called together. These courses are called institutes. The teachers are trained in agricultural activities and in small industries and rural crafts, and they are shown how to work for the economic, social, and spiritual betterment of the community.

The members of the cultural mission are: A director of the "Mission" who has charge of organizing and directing the work, and the cultural and vocational improvement of the teachers; a social worker whose part is that of the betterment of health and home life; a physical education teacher for sports, games, and various forms of community recreation; a teacher of music and folk songs, who at the

same time that he teaches gathers up bit by bit a wealth of folklore scattered and lost among the fields; a teacher of agriculture and animal husbandry; and a teacher of small industries and rural crafts. A "Mission" does not work exclusively with the teachers in the various institutes, the entire community is taken into the work carried on in important institutions.

Twelve of these "Missions" are going on throughout the country.<sup>1</sup>

In Mexico there are Rural Circuits (Circuitos Rurales), which are groups of small communities, with a larger central community a nucleus. There is opened in each central community a thoroughly organized rural school with all its equipment and services with a well trained teacher in charge in order that the institution may serve as a demonstration center. This type of school is entirely maintained by the Federal government. In the surrounding communities there are smaller schools established with a teacher in charge who is paid by voluntary contributions from the members of the community if they are not too poor.

There are at present 2,438 schools of this type, grouped in 703 circuits. About 109,000 children have been registered in them, and an average of 97,000 attend for daily instruction. The attendance of adult men and women, is around 48,000. The dwellers in these communities suffer great privations and

<sup>1</sup>H. Herring, The Genius of Mexico, 118.

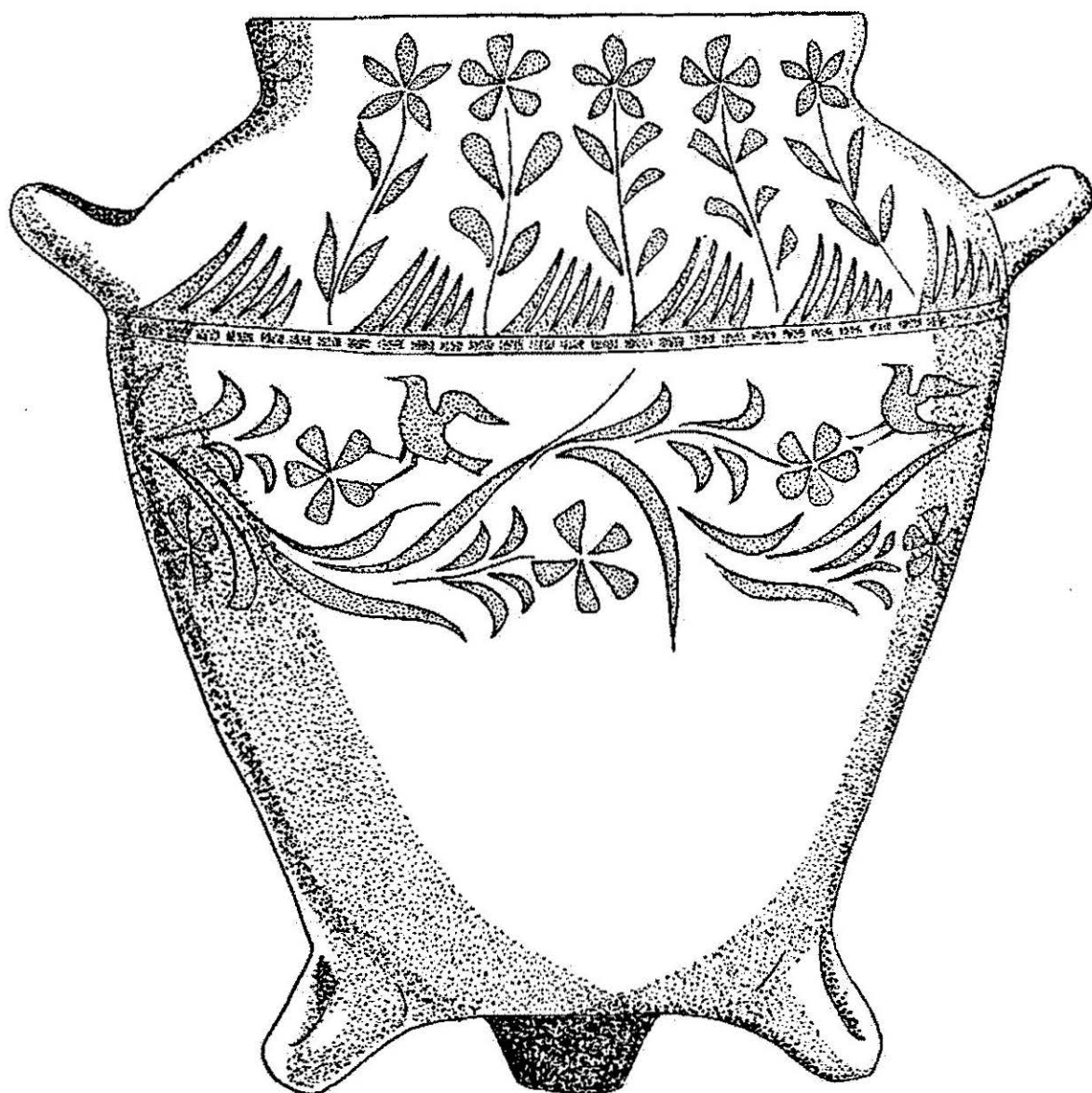
sacrifices for the schools, and they are watchful that their children attend in order to reap full benefit.<sup>1</sup>

All of this is the initial impulse of a movement that will eventually save Mexico if it goes on developing. Hundreds of well meaning men and women, both capable and unselfish, have put a sort of religion into their efforts to teach the masses. The understanding is dawning that public education in a country like Mexico is the most important state function to safeguard the future of the people.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hubert Herring, The Genius of Mexico, 114.

<sup>2</sup>Jose Vasconcelos, op.cit., 164.

Example of Ancient Mexican Pottery



From School Arts Magazine

February 1932,

Page 365.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE PLACE OF MUSIC AND ART IN MEXICAN EDUCATION

In no better manner can the lives, capabilities and achievements of a people be traced, than through their art. A volume, printed by the four color process, and given over entirely to illustrations, has recently been published, that will do more for the discernment of the Mexican's educational needs in matters artistic, than any amount of words upon the subject.<sup>1</sup>

This book, entitled Open Air Schools of Painting, contains the work of a sufficient number of different pupils to be fairly representative of Mexican artistic tendencies. I have drawn the following conclusions, which of course, may or may not be in accordance with the views of others:

(1) The Mexican loves color. He gloats over it, he records nature's hues lovingly, reverently.

(2) Everything appears big, grandiose, to the Mexican. He loves large masses, trees, mountains, houses. There is almost a tendency toward braggadocio.

(3) The Mexican is a home-loving person. The younger pupils invariably make several compositions of the home, the yard, the interior, while the married pupils though not old, by any means, invariably paint the *ninos* and *ninas*. These very ordinary children are imbued with a saintliness

<sup>1</sup>See illustrations by various pupils throughout Las Escuelas de Pintura al Aire Libre, Saca. Ed. Pub., Mexico City.



which the father doubtless imagines to exist, with such apparent reverence does he paint his offspring.

(4) The Mexican does not cultivate the intricacies of perspective. That involves work, and hard work. He omits it as an unnecessary luxury.

(5) The Mexican loves to paint people in action. He records their posture, expression, and various duties fairly accurately, but as for any knowledge of artistic anatomy, which is studied in every American art school, he has simply not even a speaking acquaintance with the subject. It also involves much hard mental labor.

(6) When the Mexican sticks to landscapes he is safe. When the Mexican sticks to design he is also secure from detection, but he should avoid street scenes and people unless he wishes to advertise some rather serious deficiencies to the world at large. Even Adolfo Best-Maugard, who wrote the standard text upon Designs for the Mexican school system, makes most serious errors when he attempts to teach the illustration of arms, legs, hands, etc.<sup>1</sup>

However, the Mexican has a great love for fine arts which has been taken into careful consideration in the preparation of curricula best adapted for his needs.

The Department of Fine Arts has eight persons in its central directive personnel, and in addition, 32 administrative employees, 545 in teaching duties, 17 subprofessional, 32 laborers and 104 in the attendant service.

<sup>1</sup>Illustrations in Metodo de Dibujo, Adolfo Best-Maugard.



It attends to copyrights, the technical direction of vocal music and concerts, the popular evening schools of music, physical education, drawing, manual training, the National Museum of Archeology, History and Ethnology, and the inspection and care of artistic and historical monuments.<sup>1</sup>

The Bureau of Drawing and Practical Arts directs the work in that field in 146 schools of the Federal District and the states. It prepares the course of study, provides special teachers for the different subjects, furnishes the necessary supervisors to keep the work going on in an efficient manner and eight are assigned to duty in the National Normal School of Mexico City.<sup>2</sup>

Many exhibitions of the work of Federal school pupils, in pencil, ink, charcoal, pastel, oils and water color, are held in the national and state capitals and in foreign countries. To numerous school systems, colleges and universities of the United States, smaller collections have been sent, 52 being shipped in the month of September 1929.<sup>3</sup>

This bureau also has charge of the decorations for entertainments and school fairs, the scenery and stage-settings for the school theaters, and whatever other art work may

<sup>1</sup>James F. Abel, "National Ministries of Education, U.S. Educational Bulletin, No. 12, 1930, X, 123-4.

<sup>2</sup>Cameron D. Ebaugh, Education in Mexico, 108.

<sup>3</sup>Boletín de la Secria. de Ed. Pub. VIII, No. 8, Sept. 1929, Mexico D.F., 84.

from time to time be required by the Department of Education. It publishes a children's magazine under the title of "Pulgarcito" (Tom Thumb), the illustrations of which are made entirely by the school children.<sup>1</sup>

Since February 1929 the Open Air Schools of Painting have been under the direction of this bureau. The first of these Open Air Schools was established by the artist Alfredo Ramos Martinez at Santa Anita in 1913. In 1925 four were functioning in the Federal District and an exhibition showing the results of two months' work proved such a success that the establishment of three more was approved.<sup>2</sup>

There are no entrance requirements in these schools of painting. Anyone, regardless of sex, age or race may enroll. The necessary material is provided free of charge and the pupils are assigned a place from which to paint. The schools are open morning and afternoon and the intervention of the teachers is limited to watching for the finished product and preventing the pupils being influenced by the work of others. It is not even permitted that the pupil see the master paint his own pictures. Absolute freedom is given in the selection of what to paint, in the medium employed and in the execution of the work. The personality of the pupil is the sole key to the whole activity

<sup>1</sup>Cameron D. Ebaugh, op. cit., 109.

<sup>2</sup>Boletín de la Secretaría de Pub. Ed., Vol. VIII, No. 2, Feb. 1929, Mexico D.F., 81

of the school. In this way their production bears the natural and unstudied stamp of creative performance that is indifferent to the "good" and the "bad"--the eternal postulate of art, at least such is the opinion of Salvador Novo.<sup>1</sup> Being a Mexican himself, he is doubtless rather insensitive to the horrible atrocities committed against the laws of perspective, formal composition and rudimentary knowledge of the underlying fundamentals of anatomical drawing.

There are also free schools of Sculpture. From the very beginnings, these schools of painting and sculpture have been a marked success. Frequent exhibitions and press comments have everywhere been most laudatory. Through the medium of such establishments, the Federal Department of Public Education is succeeding in arousing a love for things Mexican, a spirit of patriotism--of Mexican nationalism. Ideas of racial or class superiority are being supplanted by new concepts of equal opportunity for all, rich and poor, white, Mestizo and Indian.<sup>2</sup>

Now, let us consider the work of the department in the student of Music. In 1929 the Bureau of Solo and Chorus singing, with 130 trained teachers and five supervisors, gave all music instruction in 156 schools both in and out of the capital, in the National Normal School, in

<sup>1</sup>Salvador Novo, Pub. de la Secria, Monografia de las Escuelas de Pintura al Aire Libre. Pub. Meixoc, D.F. 1926, 12.

<sup>2</sup>Cameron D. Ebaugh, op. cit., 111.

the school for Indian youths, and in six evening schools, and supervised the music instruction in 300 incorporate plants. There were 62,560 boys and girls who received instruction in music during the school year. There were also 11 chorus centers in which 3185 working men and women were given instruction in singing and instrumental music. In order that the instruction may be uniform, the supervisors hold weekly conferences with the music teachers of their district and also conduct a model class in technique.

An indication of the activity of this bureau is evidenced in 289 concerts held during 1928-1929. One of these was held in the National Stadium in Mexico City, 5000 boys and girls taking part.<sup>1</sup>

Another, held in the monumental amphitheater in Chapultepec, offered chorus selections of 2000 voices, all workmen. On Mother's Day and Arbor Day, concerts were held in all Federal Schools. During the same year an orchestra composed entirely of teachers was organized and this body, with the classic chorus of the Department, similarly composed, participates in all major concerts. On Sundays, the workingmen's chorus centers hold concerts in the public parks before large audiences. Copies of musical compositions were sent to foreign countries and to the directors of Federal Education in the Mexican States, with the view to popularizing Mexican music.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 107.

The Popular Night School of Music was established for the purpose of providing the laboring classes with artistic culture through the popularization of knowledge conducive to the correct interpretation and execution of musical, dramatic, and choreographic compositions.

The offerings in this school are of an eminently practical character, so that persons of limited resources may receive such instruction as will enable them to live immediately, a fuller and more enjoyable life.

To the end of furnishing wholesome diversion, numerous concerts in which glee clubs, orchestra, and dancing classes participate, are held in public parks and halls.

The following courses are offered:-

**OBLIGATORY:** Chorus Singing, Solo Singing and Theory of Music, Elements of Rhythm and Expression, Popular Chorus Singing.

**OPTIONAL:** Opera Chorus, Piano (2 courses), Stringed Instruments, (Violin, Viol, Cello, Viola, etc.), Common Instruments (Mandolin, Guitar, etc.), Band Music, Elocution and Scenic Practice, Aesthetic Dancing.<sup>1</sup>

The following table will show the activities of a night school of music, which undoubtedly will prove more of a salvation to the minds and morals of the Mexicans than many years of the teachings of the Church. Its comprehensive nature is readily discerned, and it is gratefully patronized by the appreciative Mexicans who are now

<sup>1</sup>Boletin de la Sec. de Ed. Pub., Vol. V, No. I, Mexico, D.F., 1926, 60

being offered opportunities hitherto offered only to the moneyed class, thanks to the democratic scope of the Department of Education.

Like all Latin peoples, the Mexicans are exceptionally musical, and the government long ago discovered that a plentiful supply of music was essential to peaceful rule. The Mexicans are described as being as musical as the Hungarians. The type of folk-song to be heard among the half breed and Indian classes is plaintive, melancholy, and beautiful, couched usually in the minor key, and very reminiscent of old Spain.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a translation of a table appearing on page 414 of El Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico (1924-1928) Volume II, published by the Department of Education in Mexico City, from 1924 to 1928:-

#### THE POPULAR NIGHT SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Work evolved covering the period from January 1,  
1925 to June 30 1928

	Year of			
	1925	1926	1927	1928
Pieces taught	12	12	12	12
Works undertaken in all classes	214	249	148	42
Festivals in which the students take part	---	37	30	18
Festives organized by the schools	36	43	36	5

<sup>1</sup>L.Spence, Mexico of the Mexicans, 93.



The following table represents the works undertaken in the Popular Night School of Music from December 1924 to June 30, 1928.<sup>1</sup>

ESCUELA POPULAR NOCTURNA DE MUSICA--OBRAS PUESTAS

Comprende del 1o. diciembre de 1924 al 30 de junio de 1928

NOMBRE DE LA OBRA	TEXTO	PARTES	AUTOR
Marcha Heroica	En Espanol	1	C. Saint-Saenz
Tannhauser, Marcha	En Italiano	1	R. Wagner
Tannhauser, Coro Peregrinos	En Italiano	1	R. Wagner
Nocturno, Numero 6	En Espanol	1	Chopin
Las Ruinas de Atenas	En Espanol	1	L. von Beethoven
Iris. Himn al Sol	En Italiano	1	P. Mascagni
Novena Sinfonia	En Aleman	7	L. von Beethoven
Marcha Funebre	En Italiano	1	Berlioz
Vals Danubio Azul	En Espanol	1	N. Strauss
Boris Houdonoff. Coro de la Coronacion	Sin texto	1	Moussergsky
A los Muertos por la Patria	En Espanol	4	Ch. Viardot
Canto a la Vida	En Espanol	1	A. Flachebba
Quetzalcoatl	En Espanol	4	A. Flachebba
Moises. Coro	Latin	1	G. Rossini
Josue	En Espanol	1	Handel
Marina. Solista Soprano lo. y Coros	En Espanol	2	E. Arrieta
Canto Gregoriano	Latin	1	Del Siglo V
Himno a la Santa Cruz	Latin	1	A. Gonzalez
Adoramus te Christi	Latin	1	P. L. de Palestrina
Sabbato Sancto	En Latin	1	P. L. de Palestrina
Motete Eucaristo	En Latin	1	A. Carrasco
O. Sacrum Convivium	En Latin	1	Signoretti
Ave Maria	En Latin	1	Faure
Ave Verum	En Latin	1	Mozart
Pueri Hebreorum	En Latin	1	A. Gonzalez
Libera me Domine	En Latin	1	Perosi
Vixilla Regis	En Latin	4	J. G. Velasquez
Ave Verum	En Latin	1	E. Mosqueda
Stabat Mater	En Latin	10	G. Rossini
Trist ets anima mea	En Latin	1	A. Gonzalez

<sup>1</sup> El Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico 1924-1928, Vol. II, Dept. of Education Mexico City, 415.

## CHAPTER VII

### RECENT EDUCATIONAL TENDENCIES

Slowly but surely is rural elementary education in Mexico, fulfilling new demands. It has, moreover, successfully followed the trend of adaptability to the everyday life of the scholar, rather than placing an undue insistence upon preparation for higher training.

In addition to the "Three R's", it is essential<sup>1</sup> to know how to milk a goat, direct the building of a beehive and the keeping of bees, the construction of furniture, the improvement of a village loom, and to endeavor to impress an Indian mother that pulque and mangoes constitute an unfit diet for a baby.

To quote a speech (reprinted in The Wellspring)<sup>2</sup> of Dr. Rafael Ramirez, chief of the Federal Department of Education in Mexico:-

When the little school has been built, the joyful, noisy children come down from the mountains or go up from the valleys. They go to school carrying in their smiling eyes the hope of their redemption. There they learn to read, write and calculate, but they also learn how to become strong, how to live, and they are initiated into the rural occupations that they will follow later on.

In the evening the adults and also the old folks come to the school. Not only do they learn serious things in those little rural schools, they also learn how to sing

<sup>1</sup>Mary Jenness, "Mexican Life in the Country", The Wellspring, February 22, 1931, 8.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. Cit.



and how to amuse themselves, because rural life in most Mexican communities is monotonous, tiresome, and sad.

This year we began a drive for the erection of open-air theaters in all of our rural schools. In these theaters plays with new social orientations and an optimistic end are to be performed, and festivals of sports and culture will take place, thus educating the people while they amuse themselves.

A visit to a rural school will undoubtedly disclose a variety of crafts absorbing the entire attention of the pupil so engaged.

A member of a seminar expedition<sup>1</sup> passing through Oaxaca in 1930, made the following observations upon rural school activity:-

The visits to rural schools were particularly interesting. At Oaxaca we saw a barefooted potter, with exquisite skill, shape beautiful vases before our eyes, twisting his clumsy wheel between his sensitive and skillful feet. The gardens and livestock all testified to the eminently practical methods of the rural schools. In these institutions growing boys and girls learn the ancient fundamental arts and crafts. It is the "Three R's" of the trade school.

The devotion of the people to the new school system is evidenced by many little one-room schoolhouses, some of which we saw, built by the villagers themselves, as their contribution to modern education in Mexico.

We came away with a new sense of the paradox of two races which have mixed, and at the same time show definite cleavage--a sense which the reading of many volumes could not have given us. They are proud of their Indian blood, these Mexicans, and justly proud. At Oaxaca, one of the arches of the rural normal school proclaims that this school is dedicated to the "Indian race". They do not call themselves Latin-American, but Indo-Latin. The Indian is the dominant element in the nation, the persistent strength and the peculiar problems stemming from that of the Indian dominance.

<sup>1</sup> Florence E. Allen, An Adventure in Understanding, 3.

In these foregoing paragraphs, written by first-hand observers of rural Mexico, lies the key to the rural educational program,--the education of the Indian, with reference to his particular native characteristics and occupations.

His is a more plodding personality, as opposed to the mercurial temperament of the Spaniard. His pursuits must include muscular exertion, combined with a high degree of skill and a fair amount of technical knowledge.

"Through self-activities to self-dependences" is the slogan of the educational warfare, coined by Manuel Barranco, which should be the ideal of every educator in the crusade against ignorance and misapplied pedagogy.

First of all, the education of the Indians is a national necessity, according to Barranco, so as a national problem, the Federal government has the right and the duty to handle it.

The problems presented in educating the Indian tribes may be somewhat appreciated when their variety is disclosed. In yucatan reside the Mayas, also in the Territory of Quintano Roo, in Hidalgo and central Vera Cruz are the Otomies, in Vera Cruz are found the Totonacs. The Tarasco Indians inhabit the state of Michoacan, the old Aztecs are in some central states and in the Federal District, while Oaxaca is populated by Mixtecos and Zapotecos.

All of these zones should be under the general direction and watchful eye of the Federal Minister of Public Education

who should have a special office with a staff of general superintendents whose mission shall be to visit the zones. This opinion<sup>1</sup> was voiced by Manuel Barranco in 1915, and has, in recent years been admirably fulfilled due to the efforts of Dr. Vasconcelos, who launched the educational missionary movement which has ramified into the furthestmost districts of Mexico.

The germ of the idea of applying elementary education to actual needs, as advocated by Barranco, has developed in a very satisfactory manner, considering the cramped funds under which Mexican education must always labor. Says this writer:

Education must make the individual efficient. Social fitness includes (1) Fitness to work and form a family. (2) Ability to be a sound producer and consumer. (3) Intelligent possession of a sum total of knowledge sufficient to give him an idea of the civilization in which he is living with a simple conception of the struggles of humanity to get where it is now. (He explains that this last paragraph refers to the study of history). (4) Possession of moral and aesthetic ideals of the social group in which he lives. To do--to think--to love,--upon this basis should the Indian curriculum be made.

Patience is another great Indian virtue, making him more amenable to training and lessening the already great responsibilities of a conscientious teacher. A Protestant missionary teacher<sup>2</sup> refers to the native persistence as follows:

One characteristic that I have mentioned is that of infinite patience. The beautiful handwork is explained only when one realizes that time counts for nothing as

<sup>1</sup>Manuel Barranco, Mexico and its Problems, 23.

<sup>2</sup>Hazel McAllister, Mexico, Official Organ of the K.E. Church in Mexico.

they execute its beauties; to wait and not grow restless is a lesson we neighbors to the north need to learn.

Evidently it was to the Mesitzo, rather than the Indian, that reference was made by Nicolas Mariscal,<sup>1</sup> when he tabulated the causes of the artistic decadence in Mexico. Translated, he concludes that constant factors such as geographical altitude, ethnic considerations such as indolence and indifference are to blame. Variable contributing factors were listed as youthfulness, insofar as a national history was concerned; politically, superstition; economically, poverty; frivolity and intrigue insofar as morals were considered.

The organization of modern elementary schools is ably discussed by Charles William Dabney.<sup>2</sup>

(1) The present leaders of the people are thoroughly committed to the cause of public education. The Constitutional party and its leader are pledged to the development of the schools.

(2) It is agreed that the initiative shall be left to the local communities, the municipios and the state, perhaps, with the supervision and direction from the national government, but with no centralized control.

(3) The people are firmly determined that these schools shall be as they say, "free, lay and compulsory". The leaders are intensely opposed to church control.

<sup>1</sup>Nicolas Mariscal, El Arte en Mexico, 12.

<sup>2</sup>Charles William Dabney, A Star of Hope for Mexico, 12,13.

(4) In organization, the schools follow the French plan, rather than the American, the primary grades being comprised within 6 years, 4 called "elementary", and 2 called "superior". Since they were left to the initiative of the local authorities, the schools do not cover the field, and vary much in excellence. Some cities have fairly good schools, but the majority of the country schools are poor. The instruction is generally limited to the "Three R's". (Here Dabney seems to disagree with other observers of Mexican rural schools, although his book was published in 1931.) This observer adds that the instruction is very indifferently given by poorly trained teachers from the lower orders of society and that it is safe to say that three-fourths of the Mexicans are still illiterate.

In the Seminar Lectures entitled *The Genius of Mexico*, delivered in 1930 and printed in 1931, the same time as the publication of Dabney's work, a different aspect of rural education and the abilities of rural teachers is presented. The following paragraphs will perhaps cast a somewhat different light upon the rural problems and their treatment.<sup>1</sup>

For the preparation of teachers in the mountains and fields there are scattered throughout the country fifteen regional normal schools. They carry on remarkable work. Within two or three days we will visit the one which

<sup>1</sup>Hubert C. Herring and Katharine Terrill, *The Genius of Mexico*, 117, 118.



functions in Oaxtepec. You will then get an idea of the important work which these modest institutions are performing. They provide the student with the needed academic and vocational knowledge; they teach him the rural industries and crafts; they train them in the work which they are to carry on later in the communities; they give many opportunities for sports and games; they teach them how to bring recreation into the lives of a community; they forge in them a temperament for social leadership and devotedly deposit in their hearts the seed of an immense affection for the country people and a great longing for their redemption. Many young graduates of these regional schools are doing excellent work as teachers in the rural schools.

The Cultural Missions, mentioned in another chapter, have also been established to give further intensive courses to the teachers who have been called together.

In Dabney's rather pessimistic view of rural education, the commentator overlooks the fact that great projects must of necessity start with small beginnings. The aims, ideals and efforts put forth by the students in arriving at their goal, are the determining factors that really count, in educational measurements.

The whole problem resolves itself into one of finances. When salaries are commensurate with the intensive training that a really efficient teacher must undergo, conditions will most certainly be above criticism.

When money expended by greedy, grafting politicians is diverted into material for school buildings, wire for chicken pens, salaries for arts and crafts teachers, social workers, physical education directors, music and folk-lore teachers, and agricultural and animal husbandry demonstrators, then, and only then, will the ideal of adequate education for the Indian be realized.

## CHAPTER VIII

## CONCLUSION

A conclusion can be reached from the foregoing discussion of public education in Mexico that during recent years, education has made progress, and that nearly all classes of the people have put their hopes in learning and culture.

The educational plan since 1857 has been based upon the theory that education is the foundation of the prosperity of a nation, and at the same time the surest method of making impossible the abuses of power.<sup>1</sup>

However, political evils have never made education exempt. If Mexico needs anything, it needs more honesty in its administration; it needs more faithful, sincere and courageous men to carry out its problems.<sup>2</sup>

The Mexican has never known justice. He has always been a victim of treachery, and has been fed on hate and lies.<sup>3</sup>

To be effective all education must reach the individual life. General Porfirio Diaz, during his administration, took definite steps toward the establishment of the modern idea of education. In 1908, for the first time in the history of education in Mexico, education was given a department in the government. This most exalted piece of social

<sup>1</sup>J. M. Puig Casauranc, La Educacion Publica en Mexico, 11

<sup>2</sup>H. C. Herring, Genius of Mexico, 325.

<sup>3</sup>Creel, The People Next Door, 11.



justice that was ever accomplished by the educational department was the perfecting and diffusing of the national language among the natives, and which was the strongest hope of the redemption of the rural classes.

More than 70% of the Mexican population live in rural districts, grouped in tiny settlements. Mexico is essentially a rural country; and its happiness and future must depend upon the soundness of its agrarian life. The land problem must be solved; Mexico must be owned by the people of Mexico. Until that time there can never be peace or freedom or social justice or democracy or education or anything else that is decent in social organization.<sup>1</sup>

For a long time the poor people in the rural districts have had no schools, nor anything else. They were burdened with heavy taxes, and rent on a wretched wage of twenty-five to thirty-seven cents a day.

As a matter-of-fact we know that by dint of suffering, they filled up the battalions of the rebels, and made the most widespread revolution that there has been in the country. At its triumphant end they saw their schools come into being. If they will work and study now, a majority of the masses would have bread for the sustenance of the body, and learning for the sustenance of mind and spirit. Education works for the rehabilitation of the rural population.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ramon De Negri, "The Agrarian Problem", Survey, LII, 1924, 149.

<sup>2</sup>H. Herring, Op. Cit., 113.

However, education in Mexico must have a deeper meaning than merely book instruction. For a considerable length of time the tendencies have been to provide economic, moral, and social education. Constructive forces are endeavoring to bring about such reforms as those which will give the people themselves a chance to work out better living conditions, to provide opportunity for more self-expression and leadership other than through the medium of destructive revolt. The constructive is being exemplified in the present educational program, which, if completed, will be a stimulus in the great crusade for the formation of a real Fatherland in Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

If Mexican education and national solidarity is to be achieved every Mexican must kneel before the altars of his country, and in a generous denunciation of all political rancors, put aside all group hatreds; he must free himself from all political parties and ideas of social distinctions and join in one common project--national reconstruction, along lines of not only material progress, but also along lines of justice, public education, and sound government, which will make all feel proud to be Mexicans.<sup>2</sup>

No one denies the revolutions' influence, but very few have determined the manifold ways in which the intellectual life of Mexico has been affected by it. The

<sup>1</sup>Caseurano, La Educacion Publica en Mexico, 17.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. J. M. Puig Caseurano, "What's the Matter with Mexico?" World Work, vol. 56, No. 5, Sept. 1928, 530.

belief is now general that the whole population of the country "must" go to school, even if this ideal is not to be achieved in a few years, nor even perhaps in a generation. This belief implies a new attitude.

As soon as Mexico began to emerge, over a century ago, from the medieval atmosphere of the Spanish colonial regime, the theory of popular education began to appear in many forms of reading material to stimulate in the people a desire to read. After the struggle for independence was over, the number of schools grew steadily; every man who could afford it attended school, and it became indispensable for women not to be illiterate. (During the colonial period, there were men who thought it dangerous for women to read and write.) For a hundred years popular education was mainly a theory; among the really poor, few crossed the barrier of illiteracy. The believers in popular education (such men, for instance, as Justo Sierra, who became Secretario de Instruccion Publica towards the Diaz regime) never succeeded in communicating their faith to the men in the street, not even to the government.<sup>1</sup>

The traditional age-old sadness has been lightened by the hope of learning. They now play and laugh as they never did before. Perhaps the best symbol of new Mexico is Diego Rivera's (popular artist of Mexico) powerful fresco in which,

<sup>1</sup>Pedro Urena, "The Revolution of Intellectual Life", Survey, LII, 1924, 165.

while the armed revolutionist stops to rest himself and horse, the rural school teacher is surrounded by a few children and adults, as poorly clad as herself, but eager with the hope of a new day in Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

The present educational program in Mexico is making the attempt to be distinctly human in characteristic--the child is imbued with the idea that he is a member of the human race, and that all peoples are his fellows, and that there is enough land in Mexico for all to live in peace and love.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid, 166.

<sup>2</sup>Jose Vosconcelos, "Educational Aspirations", Survey, LII, 168.

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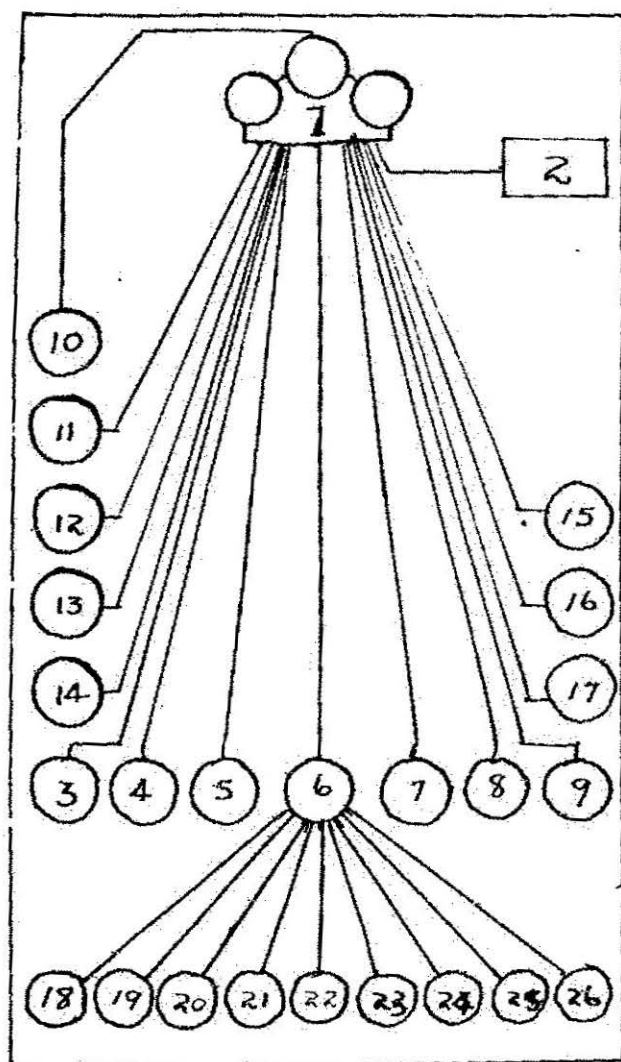
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## APPENDIX

I

ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC  
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Noticia Estadística Sobre La Elección Pública en México

Página 3

1. Oficinas Superiores (Higher Offices).
2. Universidad Nacional (National University).
3. Departamento de Bibliotecas (Department of Libraries).
4. Departamento de Bellas Artes (Department of Fine Arts).
5. Departamento de Enseñanza Primaria y Normal  
(Department of Primary and Normal Instruction).
6. Departamento Administrativo (Administrative Department).
7. Departamento Escuelas Rurales (Department of Rural  
Schools).
8. Departamento de Enseñanza Técnica (Technical Instruction).
9. Departamento de Psicopedagogía (Department of Psico-  
pedagogy).
10. Dirección Editorial (Direction of Publishers).
11. Dirección de Misiones Culturales (Direction of Cultur-  
al Missions).
12. Dirección de Enseñanza Secundaria (Direction of Secon-  
dary Instruction).
13. Dirección de Arqueología (Direction of Archaeology).
14. Caja Nacional Escolar de Ahorros y Prestamos (Depart-  
ment National Bank of Savings and Loans).
15. Sección Técnica de Estadística Escolar Especial (Tech-  
nical Section of Special School Statistics).
16. Inspección General de Construcciones (General Super-  
vision of Building).
17. Extensión Educativa por Radio (Education Extension by  
Radio).

18. Seccion de Personal (Section of Personnel).
19. Seccion Contabilidad (Accounting Section).
20. Seccion de Aproximacion de Gastos (Section of Estimates).
21. Seccion de Archivo (Section of Archives).
22. Intendencia (Superintendence).
23. Seccion de Almacen (Department of Storehouse).
24. Seccion de Desayunos Escolares (Section of School).
25. Seccion Edificios (Escolares) (Section of School Buildings).
26. Seccion de Trámite (Section of Law).

GRAFICA COMPARATIVA DE LAS  
CANTIDADES TOTALES QUE EN CA-  
DA ENTIDAD FEDERATIVA SE DE-  
DICAN A LA EDUCACION PUBLICA,  
AÑO DE 1927

# AMOUNTS GIVEN EACH STATE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION. 1927

*El Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico Vol. II*

*Dept. of Education*

*Mexico City*

*1924. 1928*

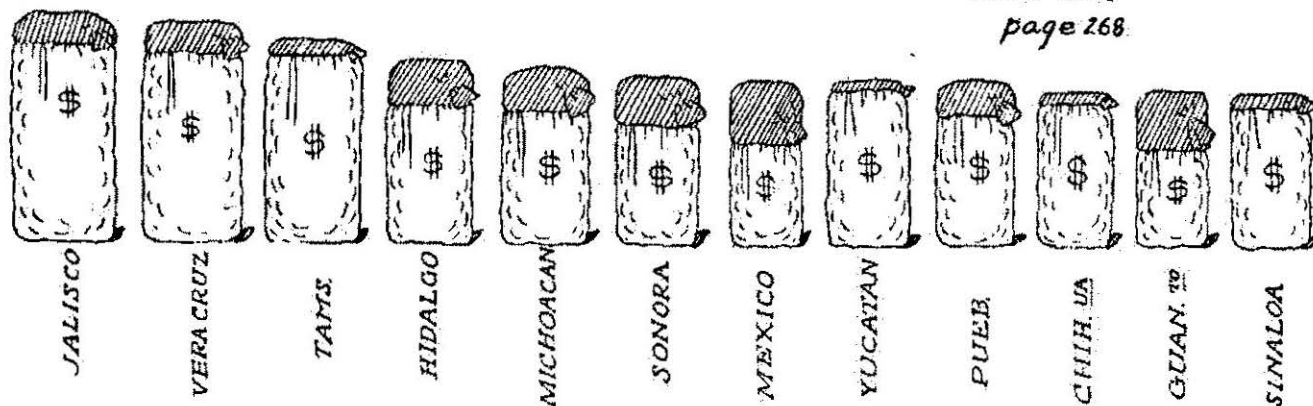
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FEDERACION

ESTADO

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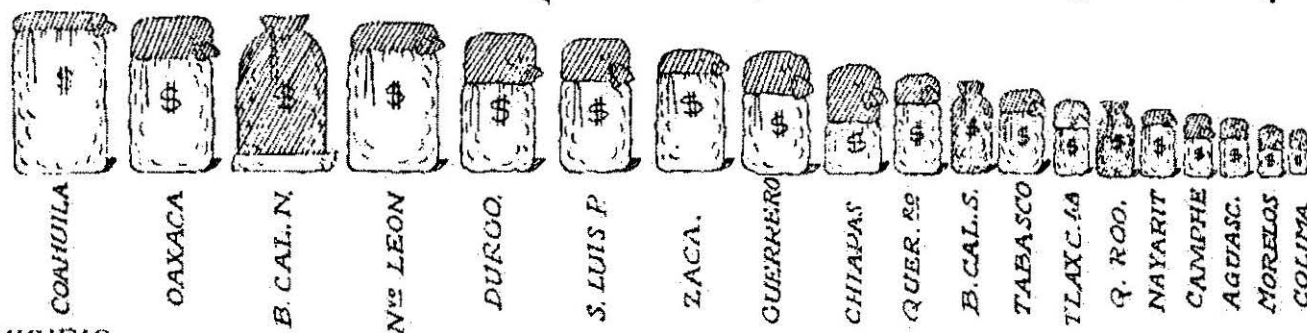


FEDERACION

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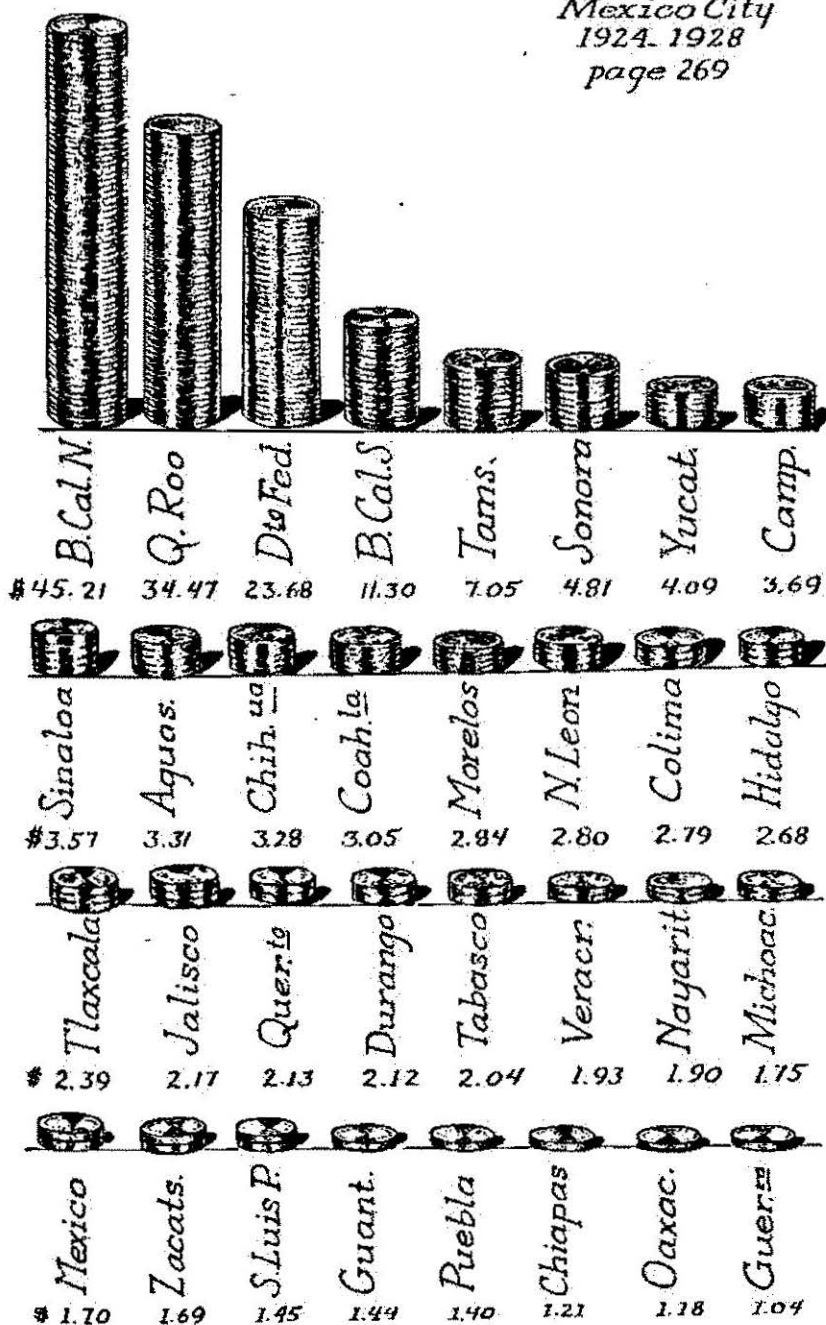
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(State and city)



1927

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*El Esfuerzo Educativo en Mexico VII*  
Dept. of Ed.  
Mexico City  
1924-1928  
page 269



DRAWINGS

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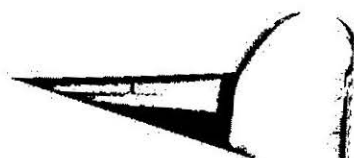
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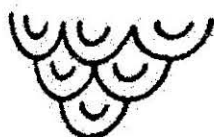
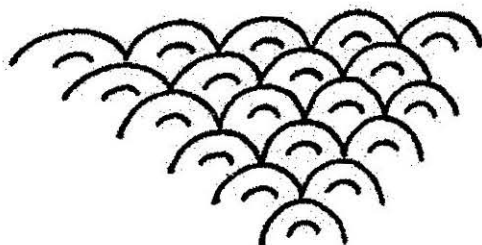
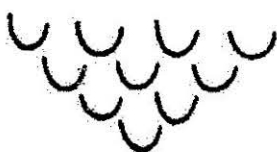
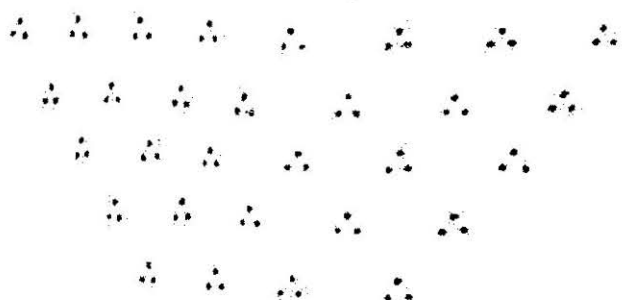
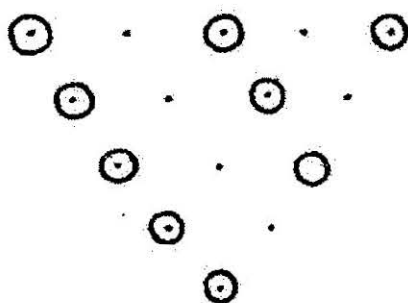
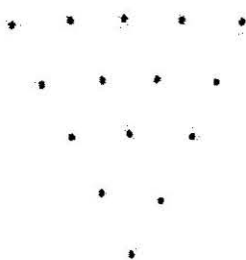
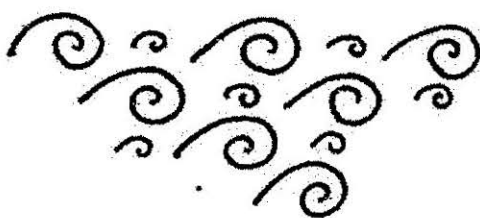
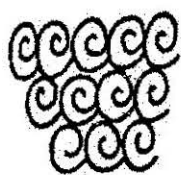
Maugard, Adolfo Best,

(Adolfo Best)

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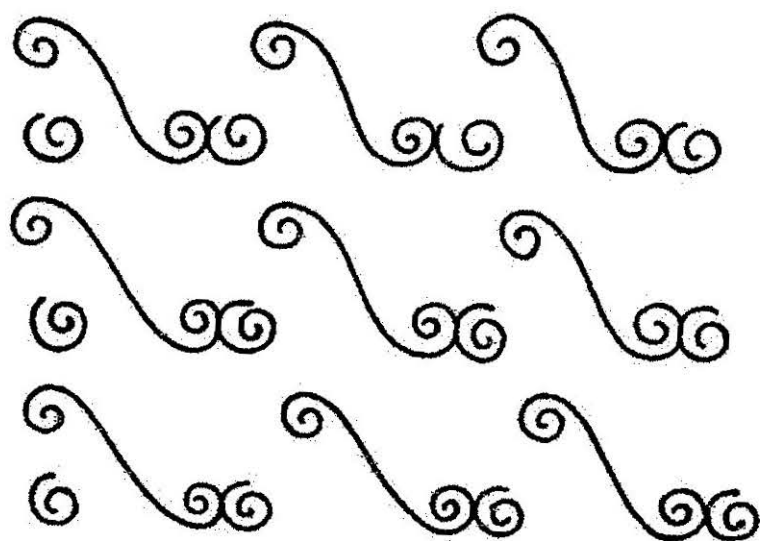
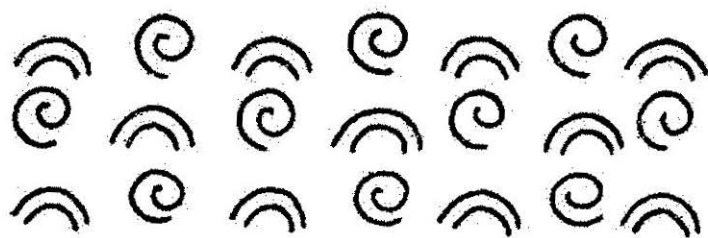
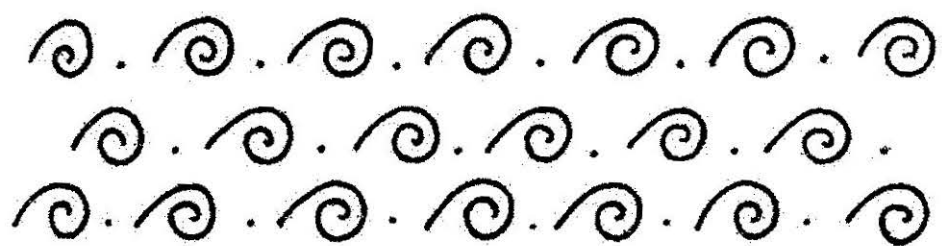
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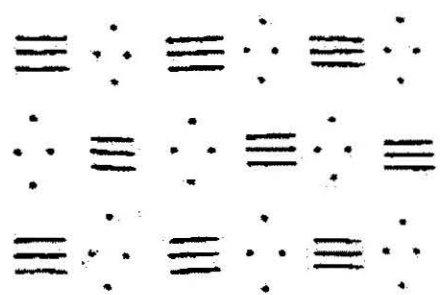
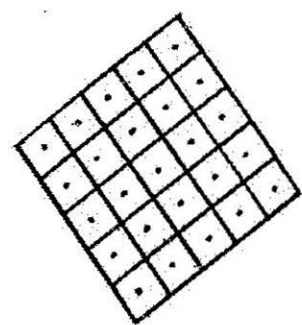
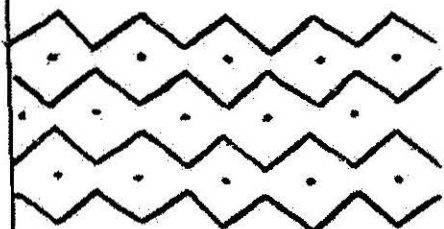
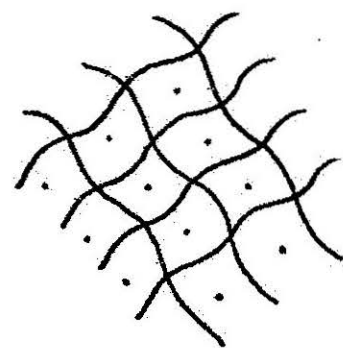
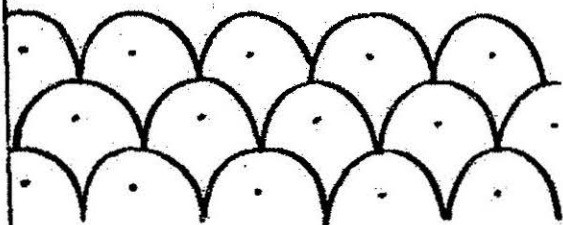
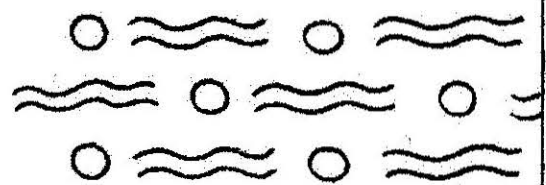
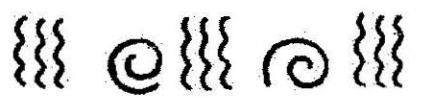
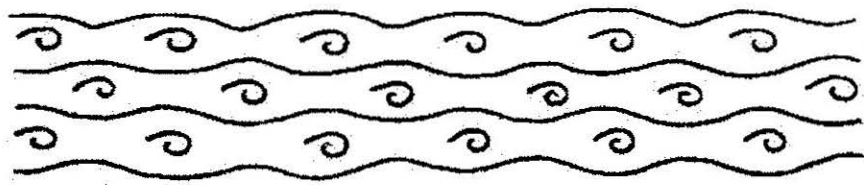
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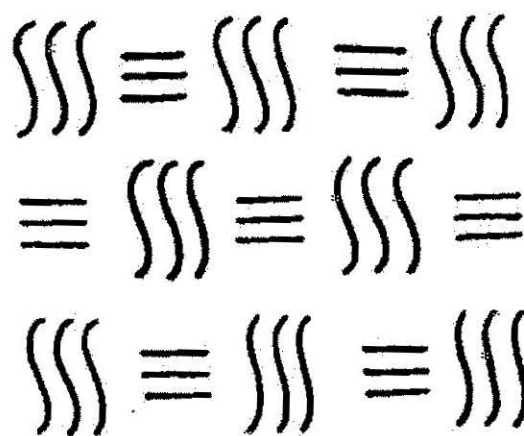
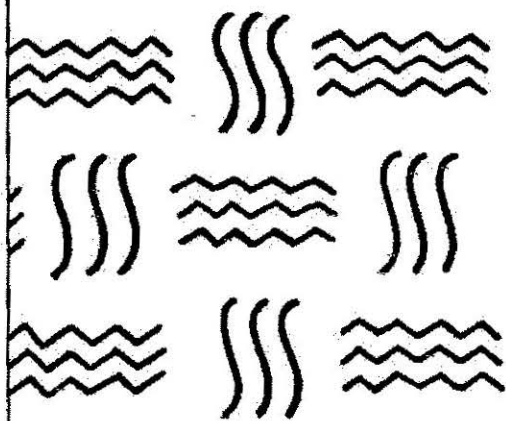
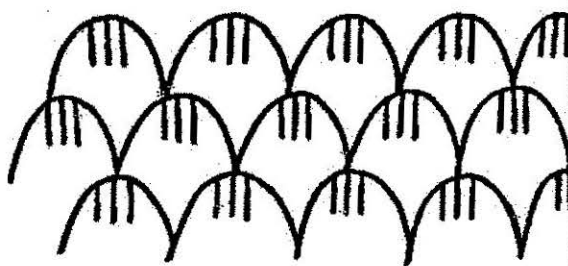
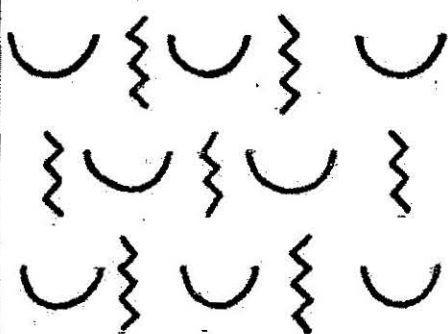
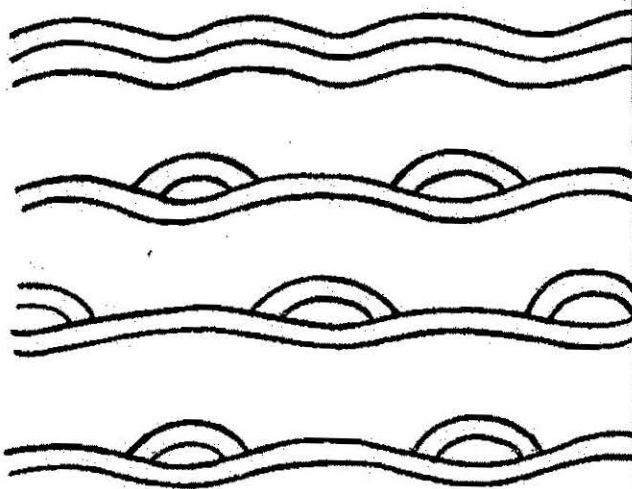
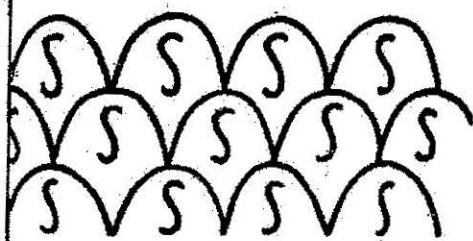
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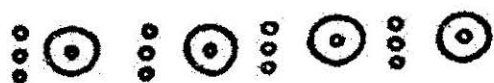
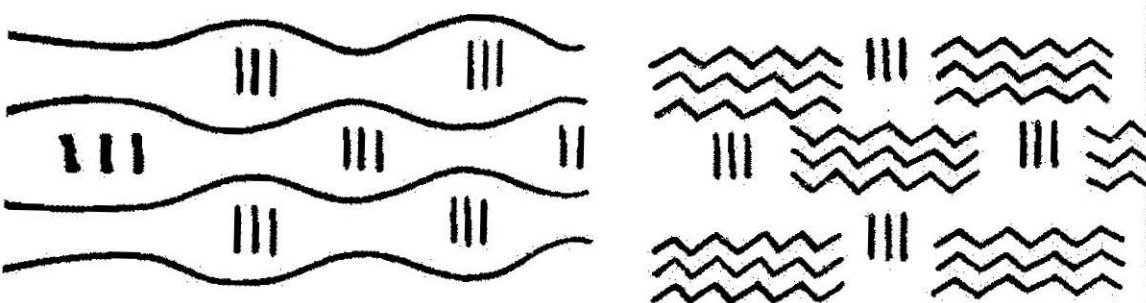
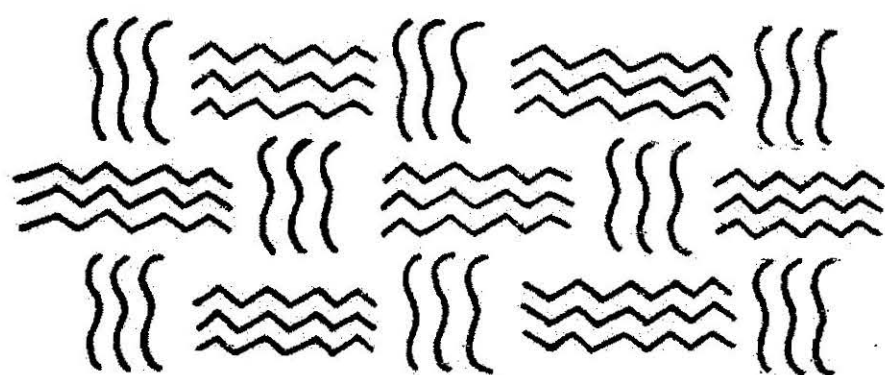
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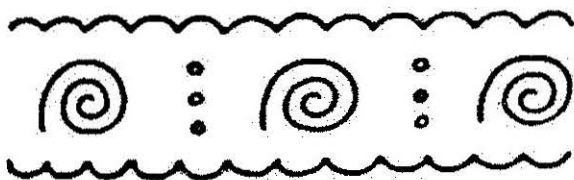
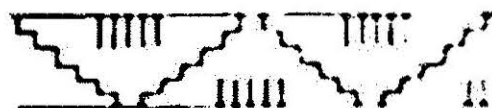
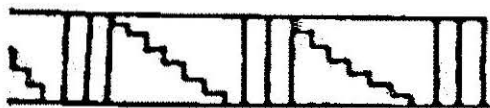
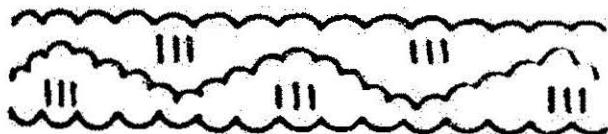
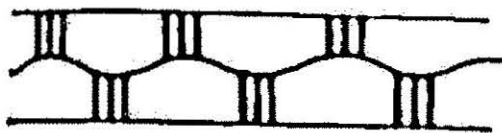


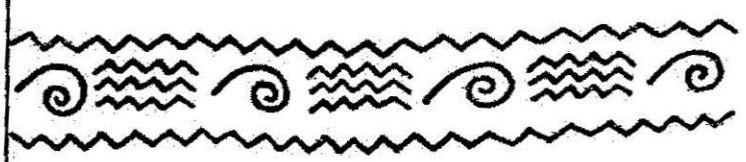
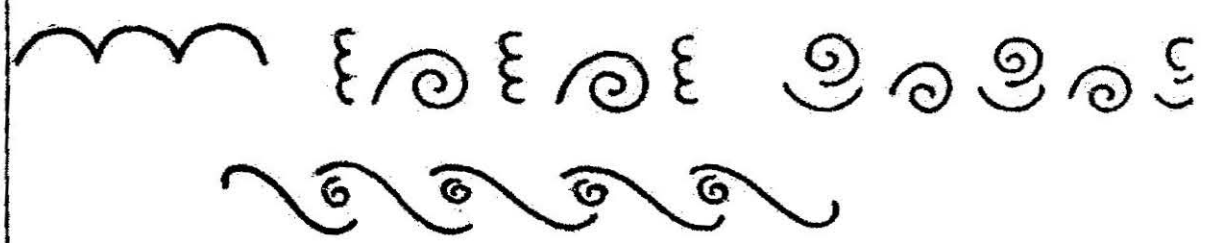
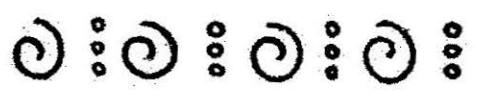
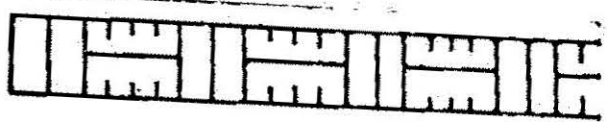
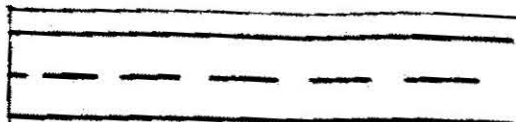


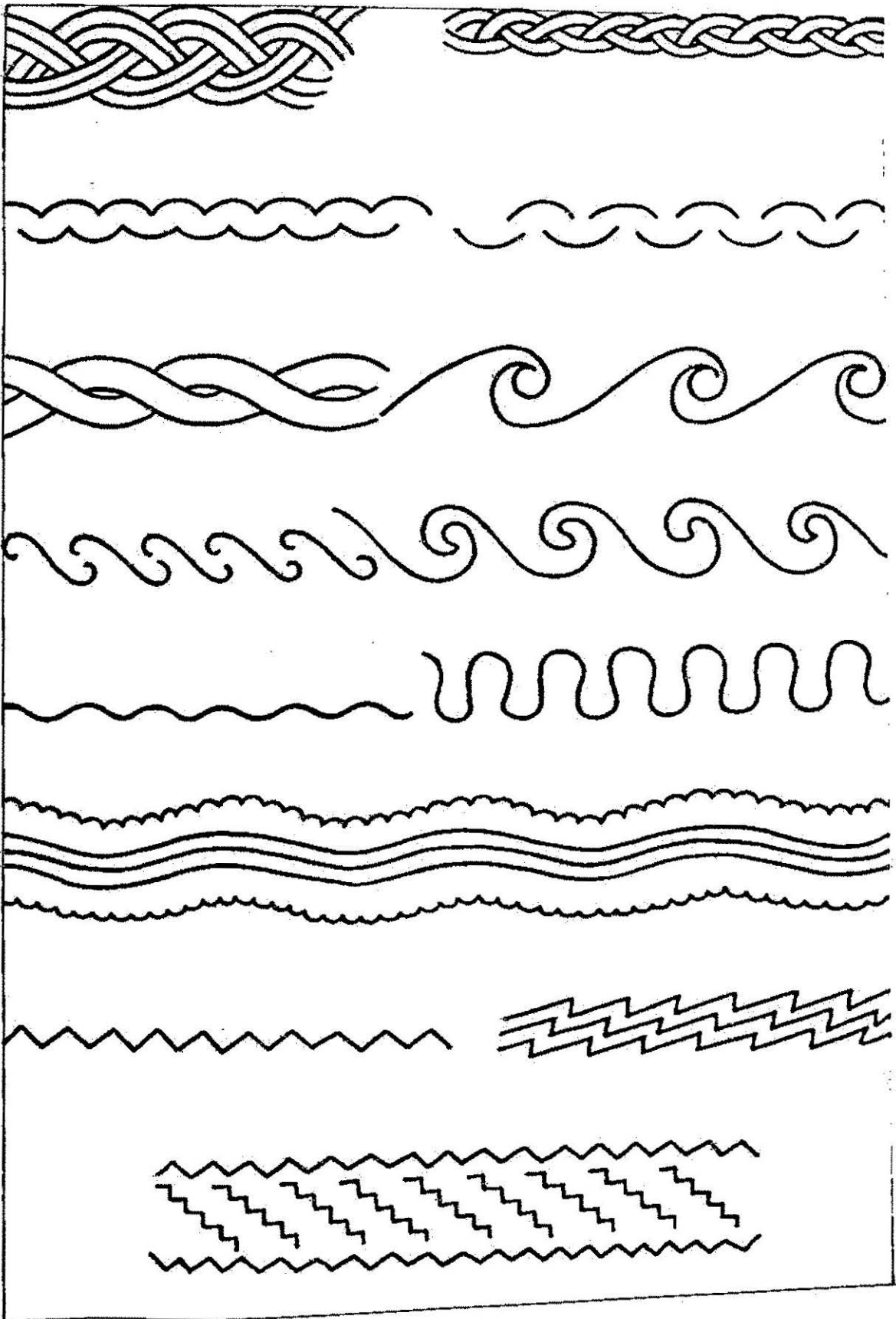


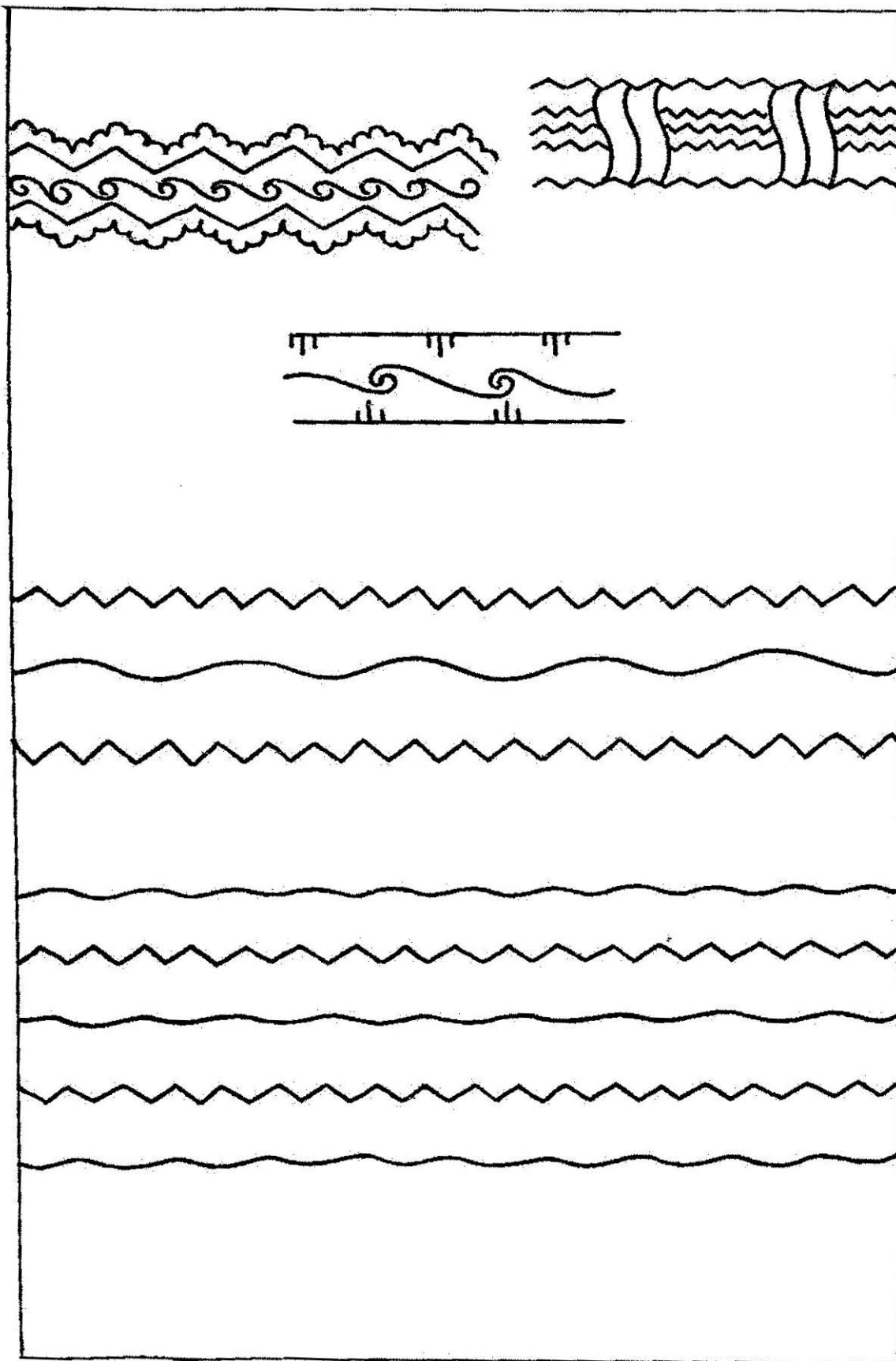


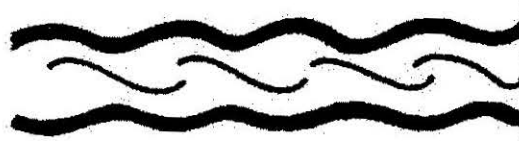
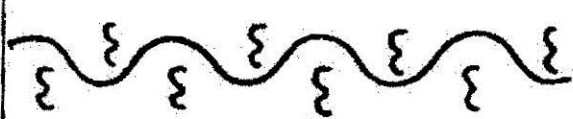
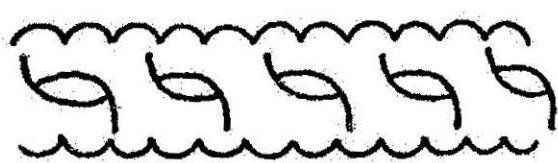
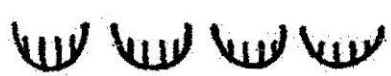
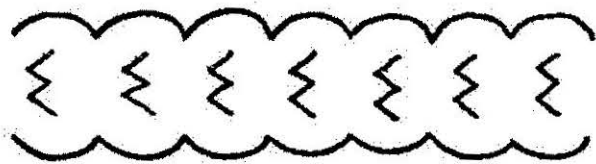


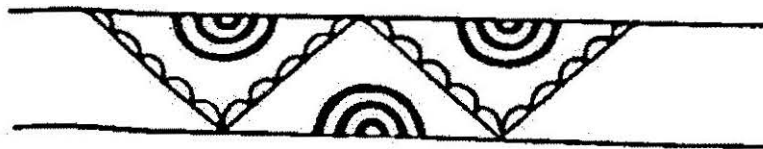
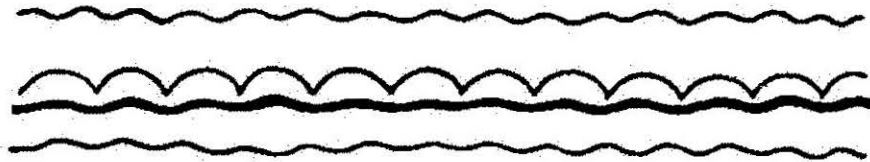
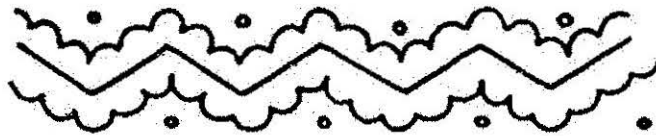
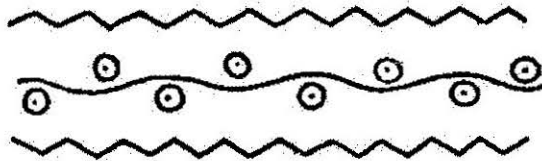
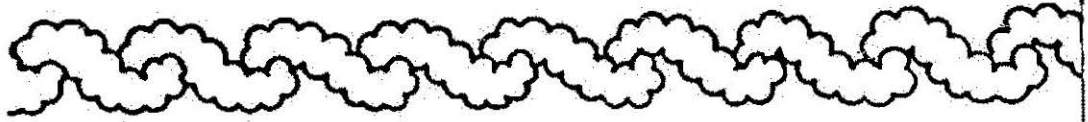




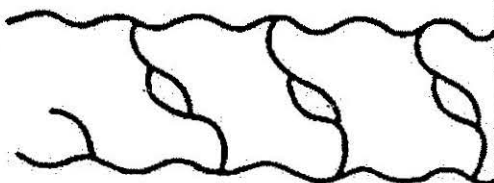
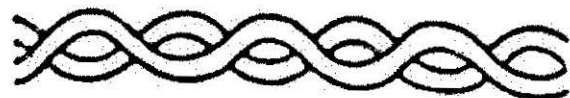
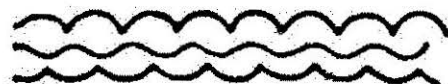
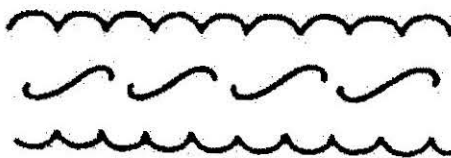
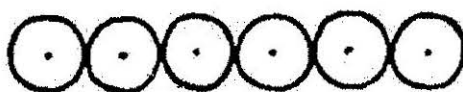
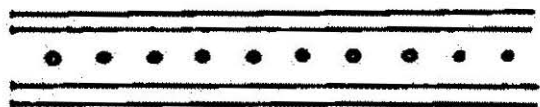
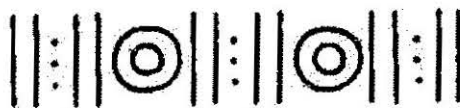
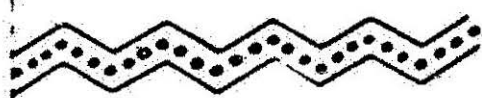


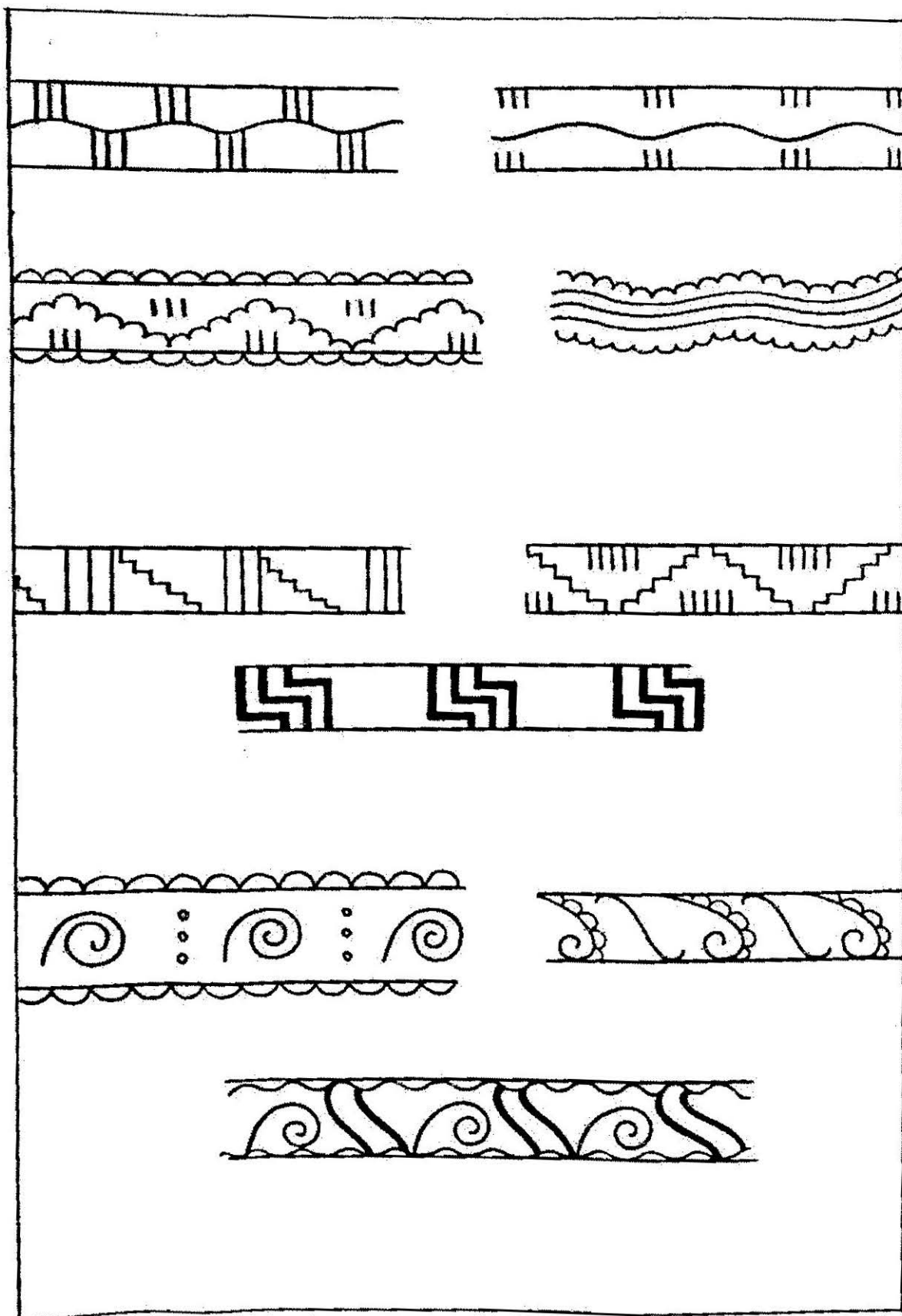


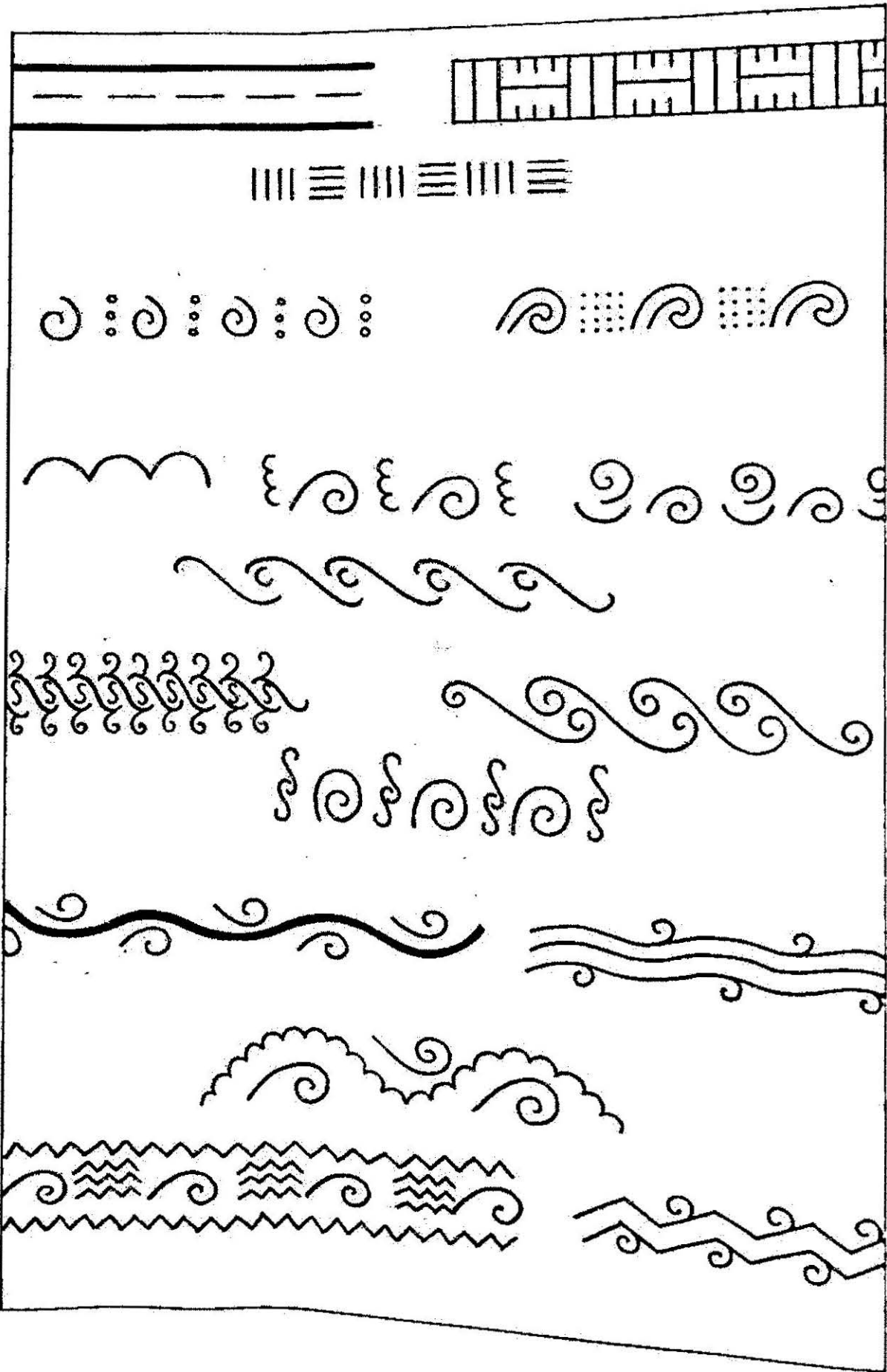


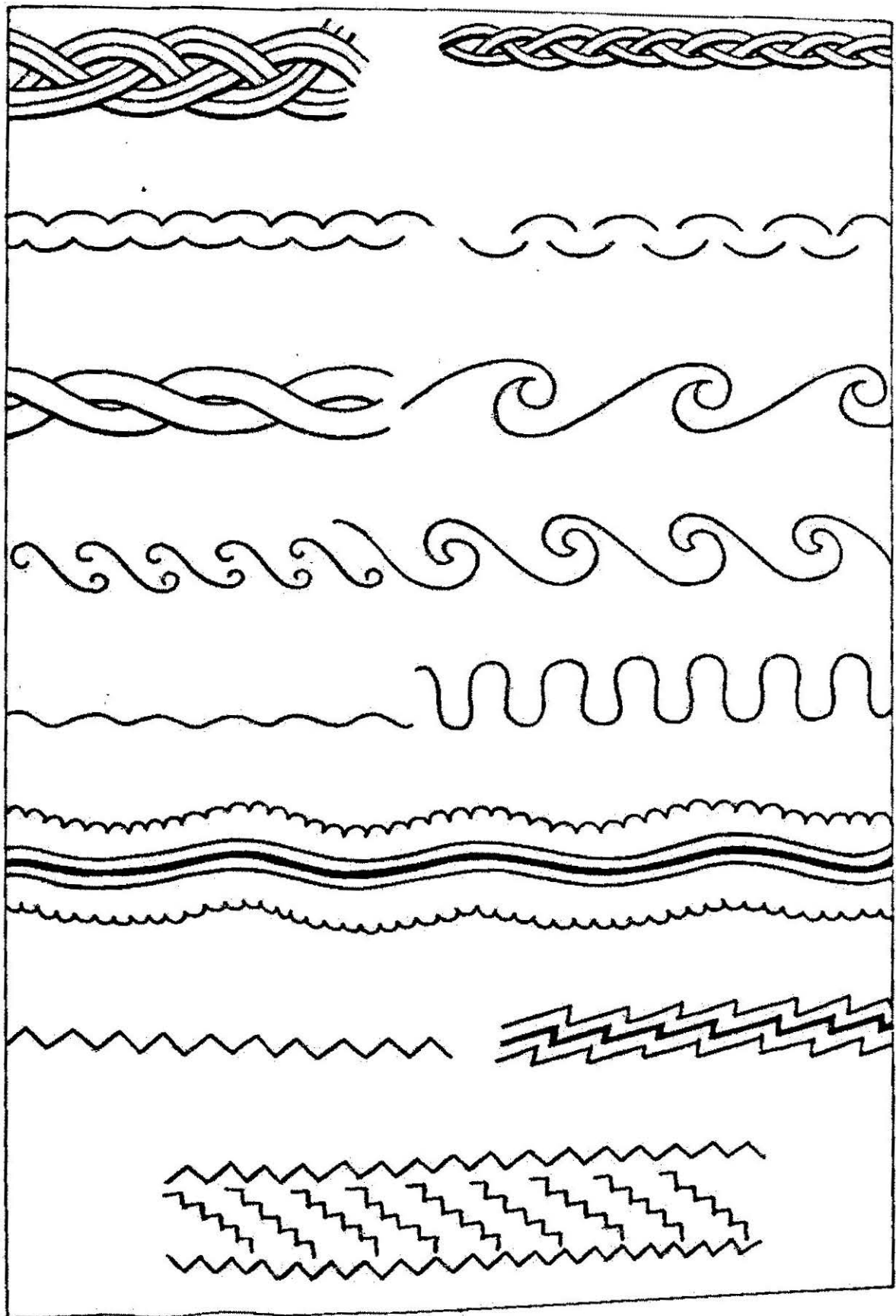


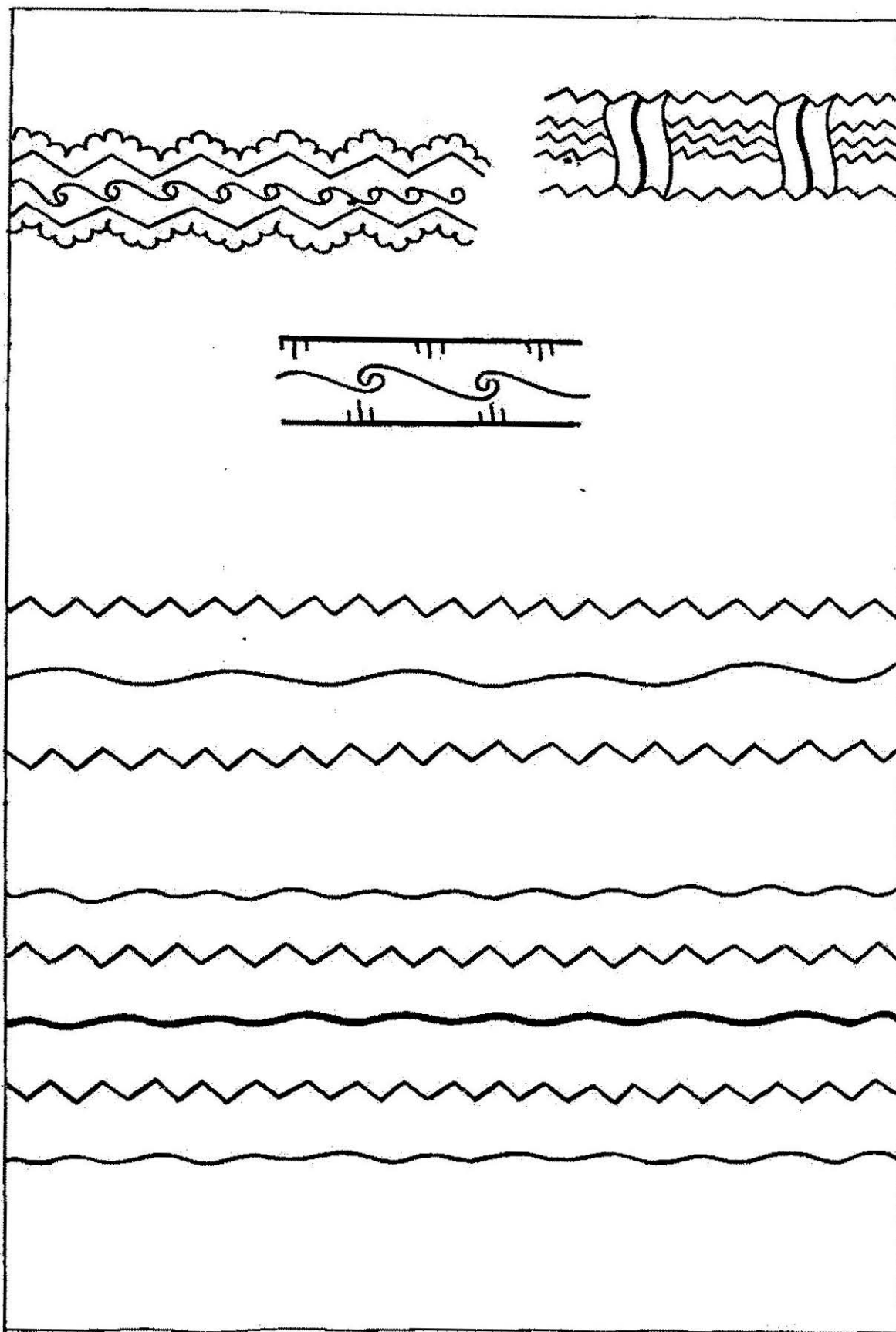


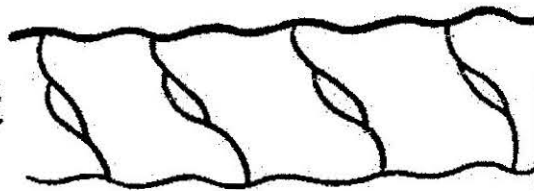
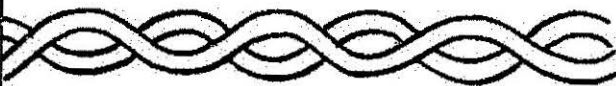
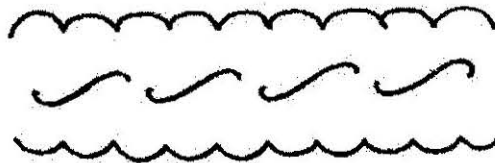
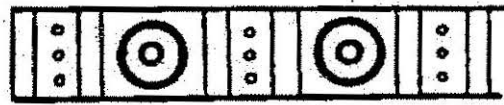
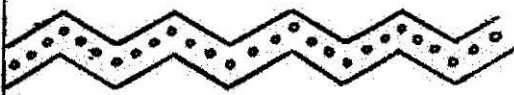


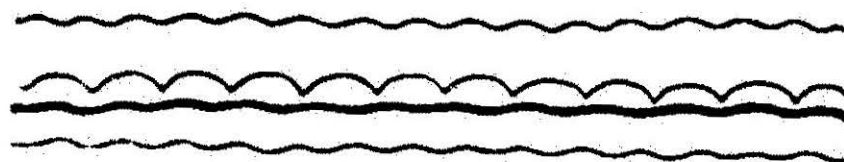
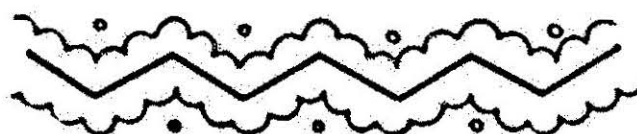
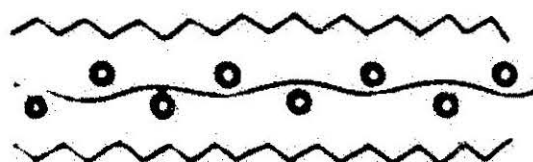
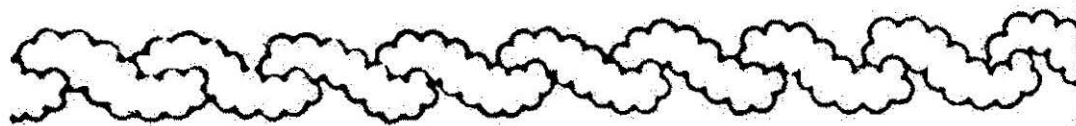




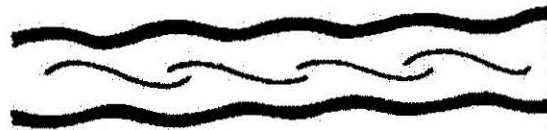
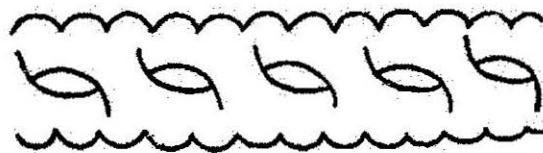
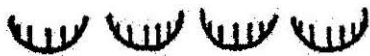
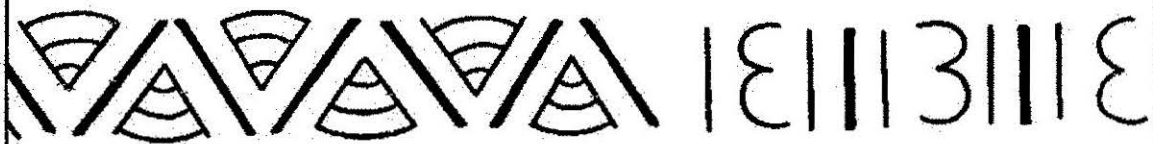
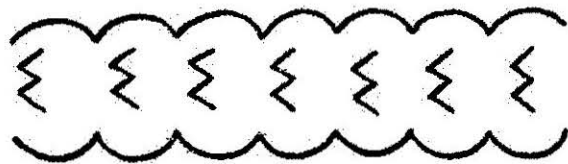
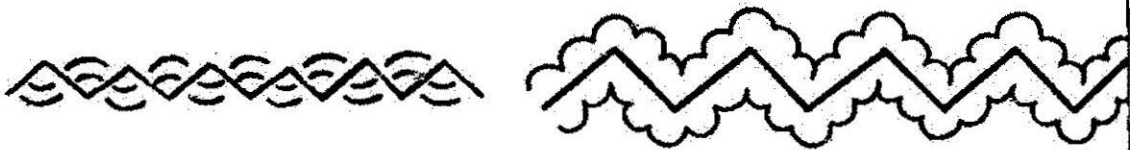


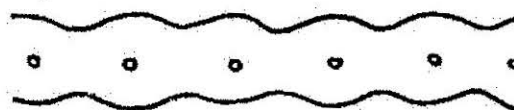
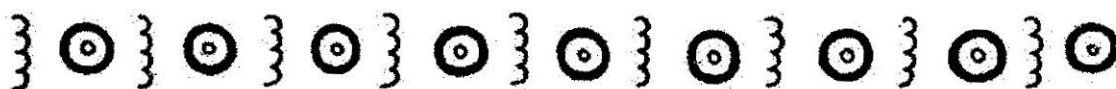
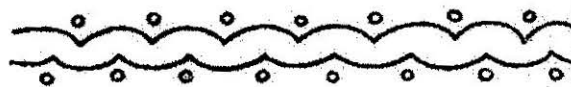
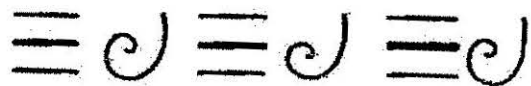
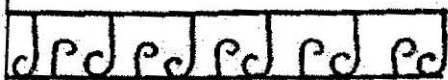






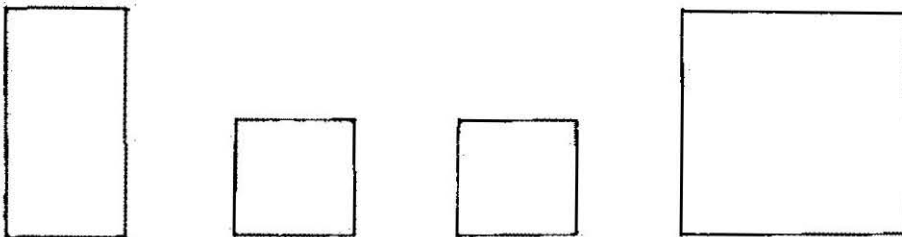




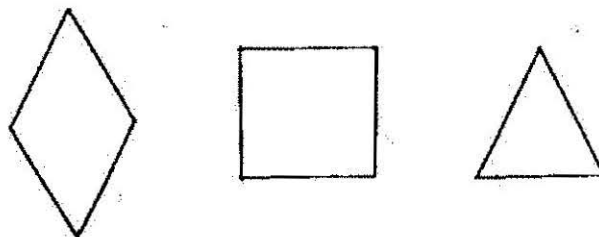


Examples (of motor tests)

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